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Nami-ko

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Nami-Ko

A REALISTIC NOVEL

By KENJIRO TOKUTOMI

Translated from the Japanese

By

SAKAE SHIOYA

and

E. F. EDGETT

BOSTON

Herbert B. Turner & Co.

1904

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Published April, 1904

Colonial Press
Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

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Introduction

NAMI-KO — a title chosen especially by the author for the English version of his *Hototogisu* — is one of the most popular novels in modern Japanese literature. The reason for this lies in the absolute truth of the story, in the careful and unsophisticated working out of details, and in its series of faithful pictures of Japanese life of the present day. The popularity of *Nami-ko,* however, must also be sought in another conspicuous fact, viz.: the novel stands unparalleled in the history of modern Japanese literature in that it embodies the spirit of knighthood in Japan. The China-Japan War of 1894 - 95 was not merely an historical event in which the two nations came into conflict. It was the first case in which the national consciousness of its existence and possibilities as an independent nation asserted itself. The thirty years that preceded that event was a period of assimilation, struggle, and bewilderment in thought and in principle.

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Slowly, however, the nation saw its ethical ideal in the resuscitation of the old Samurai spirit wedded to the broad principles of humanity. The war served to translate into words what had hitherto been only a general tendency. *Nami-ko* is therefore dear to the Japanese people through the patriotic spirit of two characters — Takeo and the General.

There is one more important point to be noticed, a tendency in the novel which characterizes all the literary work of Mr. Tokutomi and has found thousands of admirers in Japan. Owing to a peculiar Japanese household system, many evils have resulted from an undue exercise of the prerogatives allotted to the head of a family. The question of divorce, as depicted in *Nami-ko*, is its salient point. The author has settled this vital question for the Japanese, and has treated it after the manner of Hugo, Tolstoi, or Zola, in whose steps, indeed, as he avows in one of his prefaces, Mr. Tokutomi is following. It is for humanity, pure and simple, that he stands, and his object is accomplished in his sympathetic and imaginative treatment of *Nami-ko*.

Kenjiro Tokutomi was born in 1868 in a southern town of Kumamoto, Japan. He was educated at Doshisha College. When his brother, Iichiro Tokutomi, one of Japan's leading essayists, formed

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a literary society, called the Min-yu-Sha, in 1888, he joined it at once, and identified himself with its projects for about fourteen years. Slowly but surely he established a position for himself among Japanese writers, and his fame was at its height when his first important novel, *Hototogisu,* the original of *Nami-ko,* was published in 1900. His other important works are *Omoiide-no-Ki* and *Kuro-Shio* (The Black Stream), the former a sort of diary filled with poetic fancy and deep thought, and the latter a socialistic novel which is gradually attracting widespread attention.

In offering *Nami-ko* to the American and English public, the translators must acknowledge that the very nature of the two widely different languages has made the task a very difficult one. Literal accuracy has, of course, not been attempted, the endeavor being especially to reproduce the spirit and general effect of the story as an example of modern Japanese fiction. On the whole, however, it is hoped that as full justice as possible has been done to the author.

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Author's Preface

IT has been significantly said that one-half the world does not know how the other half lives, and this is especially true of the outside knowledge of Eastern civilization, and especially of our Japanese civilization. It was not to reveal our life and customs to the foreigner that *Nami-ko* was written, however, for at the time of its writing, four years ago, I did not dream that it would ever be translated, or, indeed, that it would ever reach the popularity it has gained in my own country. But the unforseen result is that the English-speaking people will learn, by its means, something about the great moral struggle now going on in Japan.

Incredible as it may seem to the Western mind, *Nami-ko* is founded on fact. I was much moved when I first heard about the unhappy Nami-ko, and I determined at once to make her life the basis of a story. It was not, of course, my purpose to attempt to reform the social customs of my country

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by means of fiction, for I am certainly more novelist than reformer, but, as the exposure of an evil frequently paves the way for its destruction, I have perhaps builded better than I knew. It is true that divorce laws, securing in some degree the rights of women, and tending to uphold the holy ties of marriage, have been promulgated in recent years, and that the ideas of humanity, freedom, and justice are day by day displacing the worn-out Confucian ethics. Yet I regret to say that the old evil does not die easily, and that there is much shedding of tears during this age of transition. In truth, it is the age of emancipation in Japan. We are struggling to throw off the thousand fetters which have bound us, and many a victim consequently falls in the struggle.

The present story is merely a picture of one episode among many. If it happen that this insignificant story — and many other significant ones, I hope — serve to acquaint you who live on the other side of the Pacific with the manner in which we live, how we feel, and what we think, what struggles we are passing through, and so tend to tighten the bonds of sympathy between us, it will certainly be of service to humanity. Especially do I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the generous American

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and English public for the sympathy they have always shown to us, and which they are now making manifest as we stand in the midst of a great national trial.

KENJIRO TOKUTOMI.

Tokyo, Jan. 21, 1904.

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Nami-ko

Book One

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Nami-ko

Chapter I

The Honeymoon

IT was evening at Ikao, the famous town of hot springs in Jôshû. A lady stood gazing at the beautiful scene revealed through an open screen in the third story of the Chigira Hotel. Her age was eighteen or thereabouts. Her hair was dressed in a tasteful magé[1], and she wore a gray crape gown, relieved by green bows at her breast.

She was of a fair and clear complexion, and though her eyebrows were a little too close together and her cheeks were somewhat thin, she seemed to be as gentle in nature as she was slender and graceful in figure. She was not like the plum-blossom, daring to bloom in the bleak north wind, nor like the cherry-flower, whose petals are blown hither and thither like butterflies in the spring

[1] Magé, or, in full, marumagé; the head dress of a married woman.

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morn. She was, indeed, like the shy daisy dimly discovering itself in the dusk of a summer eve.

In the evening of that spring day the far-away hills of Nikko and Ashio, and those on the borders of Echigo, as well as the nearer peaks of Onoko, Komochi, and Akagi, were glorious in the rays of the sinking sun. Even the cawing of the crows, flying from a tree just beneath, seemed to be toned with gold, as two fragments of cloud floated out from behind Akagi. The lady at the screen in the third story was watching their movement.

The downy clouds, not larger than could be embraced with both arms, slowly separated from the summit, and, glittering like two golden butterflies, sailed on side by side toward Ashio through the boundless mid-air. With the setting of the sun and the rising of a cool breeze in the tawny dusk, they now faded into pink, were blown off one above the other, and were seen wandering separate in the slowly darkening sky. But it was only for a short time. The lower grew smaller and smaller, and finally faded away almost unobserved. The remaining fragment now turned into dismal gray and wandered aimlessly.

Presently the hills and skies were shrouded in darkness, and only the face of the lady at the

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screen in the third story was seen pale in the night.

"Miss — Oh, what is the matter with me — I am so forgetful," Iku said, laughingly. "Madam, I should have said, I have just returned. How dark it is. Madam Nami, where are you?"

Nami, as she was called, replied, "Here I am."

"Why are you out there? Come in, quick; you'll catch cold. Hasn't master come home?"

"What is he doing, I wonder?" said the lady, as she opened the screen and entered the room. "You had better ask the clerk to send some one for him."

"Yes, indeed, I will."

As she talked, Iku, an old woman of about fifty, groped for a match in the dark and lighted the lamp.

At that moment a maid of the house was heard coming up the stairs, and, entering, she handed a letter to Iku.

"Thank you for your trouble," said Iku. "The baron is pretty late, but we have sent a boy for him. He will be in before long. Here is a letter," she added, handing it to Nami-san.

"A letter from father! Why does Takeo stay

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so long?" At that, the lady in marumagé took the letter in her hand and looked at the familiar handwriting.

"A letter from my lord?" asked Iku. "I should like to know what the news is. Surely he has written us something funny, as usual."

The maid, after shutting the sliding screens and attending to the fire, went down-stairs, and then the old woman put the bundle she had brought into a small closet, and approached Nami, saying:

"How cold it is here! What a difference from Tokyo!"

"You ought to expect that, as cherry-flowers are blooming here in May. But come and sit nearer, Iku."

"Excuse me," said Iku, as she sat down beside her mistress.

The old woman, looking fondly at the face of her young mistress, said: "I can hardly believe that you, who sit so gracefully in magé, are the same little one I had the honor of nursing. It seems but yesterday that, when your mother died, you cried 'Mamma!' on my back." With tears in her eyes she continued: "On the day of your wedding I thought how happy your mother would be if she could only see you in your beautiful attire."

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Iku wiped her eyes. The lady also sat with her head bowed, as if she sympathized with the servant. The ring on her right hand, resting on the lid of the fire-box, shone in brilliant lustre.

Presently the old woman looked up.

"I beg your pardon. I have been talking foolishly. Old age makes me childish. Miss — madam, you had so much trouble when a child. It is simply wonderful how you could have lived through it. But everything from now on will be so happy. Your husband is such a tender-hearted man — "

At this moment a servant shouted from the stairway: "The baron has come back."

"Lord, but I am tired!"

A young man of about twenty-three or so, and in foreign dress, after removing the native travelling sandals, walked up the hall and nodded slightly to the women who came to meet him. Suddenly he stopped and turned toward a lad who bore a paper lantern.

"Thanks for your trouble. But put those flowers in warm water, will you?"

"Oh, how pretty!" said the lady, as she came down to meet him.

"Really, what pretty azaleas they are," Iku

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chimed in. "Where did you get them, master?"

"They are pretty, aren't they? Look, here is a yellow one. I want Nami-san to arrange these to-morrow. Well, I'm going to take a bath now."

The lady and the old woman went back to the room.

"My master is so lively. A naval officer is always lively, isn't he, madam?"

Without replying, the lady smiled, and, brushing carefully her husband's overcoat, she touched it furtively with her lips before she hung it up.

A few minutes later the sound of heavy footsteps on the stairs suddenly ceased at the outside of the screen, and the young man entered the room, ejaculating:

"There, now I feel refreshed."

"Well, you have taken your bath in no time," said Iku.

"I am a man, you know."

He laughed gaily, and with his wife's help put on a broad-striped quilted kimono. He sat down upon the cushion unceremoniously, and rubbed his cheeks with both his hands. His head, with its close-cut hair, was as rotund as a chestnut-worm, and his sunburnt face was as red as an apple. His

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eyebrows were dark and his eyes were bright, and, although he had a "caterpillar-like" mustache, his face was still youthful, and one could not help smiling at its innocence.

"Here is a letter for you, dear," and Nami-san gave him the letter.

"Ah, it looks as if it were from father."

The young man changed his position a little and opened the letter. Another sealed letter dropped from it.

"Here's a note for Nami-san. He seems to be well. Ha, ha, such a joke! It seems as if I could hear him speak." Smiling, he laid aside the letter.

"Father wants me to tell you, Iku," said Nami, looking up from her letter and turning toward the old woman, who was setting the table for dinner, "that you should take good care of yourself. You are not used to the climate, and you will be liable to suffer from your old complaint."

"Oh, it is very kind of him to say so."

"Now I want something to eat," said the young man. "To-day I have had only two pieces of rice-cake, and walked all day long. I feel very hungry. Well, what do you call this fish? It doesn't look like smelt."

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"They call it 'yamame' — don't they, Iku?"

"Yes, they do. This tastes good — very good. Here, another bowl of rice, please."

"My master is very hungry."

"Naturally, for to-day I climbed Mount Soma from Haruna, and then over to Futatsu-take. It was while coming down over Byobu Rocks that I met the boy they sent to look for me."

"Did you really walk so far?"

"Yes. The view from Mount Soma was splendid. I wanted Nami-san to be with me. On one side is a vast stretch of lowlands, through which the River Toné winds away into the distance, while on the other side rolling hills cluster one behind another, and over their farthest ridges the white cap of Fujiyama is dimly seen. If I could write verse, I might challenge the poet Hitomaro." And he laughed merrily. "Another bowl, please."

"How beautiful it must be! How I would like to go there!" said Nami-san.

"H'm, if Nami-san could climb I would decorate her with the order of the Golden Kite. I never saw in my life such a steep and rugged ascent. About a dozen iron chains are fastened on the way, and you have to help yourself up by them. To me such a task is nothing, as my training at Yeda-

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jima, the naval academy, you know, enables me even now to climb up a mast or suspend myself from the rigging. But you have never touched even the soil of Tokyo with your little feet, I suppose."

"Bless me!" she said, smilingly, and blushing, "I took gymnastics while at school —"

"Pooh! One cannot rely much on gymnastics at the Peeress's School. I remember once when I visited the school I saw girls with fans doing all sorts of things to the sound of a piano, while some were singing a 'Song of Nations.' At first I thought it to be a fancy dance. But I found that it was what you call gymnastics!" He laughed again.

"You shouldn't say such things!"

"Let me tell you. There was standing next to Yamaki's daughter a pretty girl with her long hair hanging down her back, and in — what do you call it? — yes, a plum-colored skirt, dancing without a thought of the visitor. I am sure it was Nami-san! What! not a word to say?"

"How you talk! You know Yamaki's daughter?"

"Why, my father used to favor him, and he still comes to see us, Nami-san. Now you are silenced, aren't you?"

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"You talk —"

"Husband and wife must not quarrel so," said Iku, laughingly. "Come, let's have tea and make it up."

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Chapter II

Nami-ko

THE young man who appeared in the preceding chapter was Baron Takeo Kawashima. He had been married recently to Nami Kataoka, eldest daughter of Viscount Lieutenant-General Ki Kataoka, well known as a soldier. Availing himself of a leave of absence, he had come to Ikao with his bride and the old nurse Iku.

Nami's mother died when she was eight years old. Being then so young, she could not remember clearly how her mother looked. But she knew that her mother was always tender, and she remembered that at her death-bed she took Nami's little hand into hers, and said: "My dear child, mamma is going to a far-off land. So you must be a very good child, and love your papa and little Ko-chan." Then she wept. "You will think of me after I am gone, won't you?"

And she patted Nami's head, whose hair, now long, was then cut short on the forehead. These memories had sunk deep in Nami's heart, and not a day passed without her thinking about them.

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A year later her stepmother came. After that, everything underwent a complete change. Her own mother was from a Samurai family of note, and, although she had been strict in all things, the servants bore witness that such a peaceful home as hers was rarely to be found. The second mother was also of a noted Samurai family, but she had been sent to England in childhood, and was so thoroughly Europeanized that her active nature would not give her rest until she had effected a reform in everything that might revive the sweet memory of Nami's real mother. To Nami's father she would express her thoughts on things small and great without the least reserve, and he was wont to say in jest: "Well, all right. You know better than I." One day, however, when his favorite military secretary was talking with him over saké, he said, laughingly, as he glanced at his wife: "I tell you, Namba, you must not take an educated girl for your wife, because you will be mercilessly ridiculed for your ignorance." Witty as he was, Namba was completely at a loss how to answer him, and did nothing but toy awkwardly with his glass. Namba was said to have told his wife afterward that their daughters must not study too much,

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and that their training should be simply that of a public school.

Nami was a good and bright child. Her father took pleasure in taking his hat from her hand, as in the arms of the nurse, when only two years old, she was wont to bid him good-by at the porch. The heart of a child is like a blade of grass in spring. Though it may be covered with late snow, yet it grows when the snow is gone and the grass is free from human tread. The sorrow Nami felt at her mother's death was too deep-seated for a child of eight, yet who could doubt that she would bloom into a lovely flower if the kindly light of the sun should shine upon her. When she met her stepmother, — the large mouth, the eyes somewhat oblique, the hair dressed in a foreign style, and the costume overperfumed, — she was naturally a little shy at first.

But gentle Nami would easily have been won over had not the stepmother been strangely prejudiced against the little child. Being devoid of tact, selfish, pedantic, and somewhat disagreeable, she treated her, a simple and artless child of eight or nine, as if she were a full-grown girl. The poor child was always left alone to feel how sad and cold the world was. Nami had a mother, but she could

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not love her; she had a sister, but she could not love her. To be sure, she had her father, Iku the nurse, and an aunt, who was sister to her real mother. But, however much she was attached to them, her aunt did not live with her, and Iku was but a servant. And, indeed, with Iku, as her stepmother kept her eyes open to everything in the house, a little favor shown to or from Nami would in the end bring harm rather than good. Only her father — he was all love. But even he was careful not to cross her mother — though all this was done out of kindness to Nami. He would correct the child in her mother's presence, but behind the latter's back he would give comfort in a few but sympathetic words. This vague struggle in his mind was more than appreciated by the quick-witted Nami, and her little heart would swell with a tender and grateful feeling toward him, which would make her dare to go through fire and water for his sake.

Yet, if she showed even a shadow of such emotion, her stepmother would cause Nami great uneasiness by her dissatisfaction at such an unwarranted intrusion into her rightful domain. But if Nami kept silent and reserved, and remained apparently impassive, she would be censured ruthlessly for being dull, obstinate, and perverse. Once, when a slight

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misunderstanding arose, a volley of disparaging words was hurled at her in voluble Choshu speech and in English imported logic. And not alone was Nami reviled, but her dead mother was openly scoffed at. Whenever she wanted to retaliate, however, the thought of her father would immediately silence her bitter words.

At another time she was suspected so unjustly that she wept bitterly over her misfortune behind a curtain. But had she really a father? Yes, she had a father and a loving one. But to a girl whose home is her world, one mother means more than five fathers put together. And with a stepmother like Nami's, ten years will easily foster a perverse nature in a child and take away the gloss of her youth and beauty.

"Really," the viscount used to say, "there is nothing childish about Nami. She is so dull and gloomy." Ah, there is really no difference in flowers, whether they bloom in a pot of rude earthenware or in costly china — they all need the warming light of the sun. But Nami was a flower blooming in perpetual shade.

So when Nami became engaged to Takeo, and at last the wedding ceremony was over, she drew a long breath of satisfaction, and her father, step-

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mother, aunt, and Iku did so, too — each in his or her own way.

The old nurse used to murmur that, though the viscountess loved to dress herself fancifully, she would get for Nami nothing but homely-looking things. The old nurse even wept over the scantiness of Nami's bridal outfit, and vainly dreamed upon the days long past when her mother was still alive. Yet Nami was glad to leave her father's house, and the thought that freedom and happiness yet unknown to her were awaiting her arrival made easy the parting with her dear father.

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Chapter III

The Fern Gathering

THE road that leads from Ikao to Mizusawa-no-Kwannon is about three miles in length and winds like a snake along the side of a naked hill, with the exception of one place where the hill dips into a dell and another where the path dives into a ravine and emerges on the other side. It is so well beaten that you could easily go over it blindfolded. Behind and below, the plain of Jomo lies in full view. A grassy stretch of land extends to the right and left of the road, and in springtime, when, from the soil black with burnt ashes of the last year's weeds, fresh blades of rushes, bush-clovers, goldenrods, bluebells, and the like make their appearance, they weave themselves into a delicately patterned carpet, dotted here and there with pretty flowers and the slender stems of moss-veiled ferns. To a lover of nature a long spring day spent in such a place will appear to be only too short.

On a sunny afternoon Takeo and Nami had come here with Iku and a maid of the house to gather young ferns. A little tired after their work,

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they chose a comfortable spot for a resting-place, and upon it the maid spread a rug. Takeo seated himself unceremoniously on it, but Nami took off her sandals, and dusting her kimono lightly with her pink handkerchief, sat down gracefully, saying:

"How soft this is! Such a couch is fit for a king."

"Oh, miss — I beg your pardon — madam, you look beautiful to-day. And I have not heard you sing like that for a long time." And Iku looked into her face with sparkling eyes.

"I have sung too much and feel thirsty."

"I'm sorry I did not bring some tea," apologized the maid, and, untying a package, she disclosed oranges, cakes, and sushi.

"Oranges will do very well," rejoined Takeo. And, peeling one of them, he continued: "Look here, Nami-san. You can't peel an orange like that, can you?"

"Oh, yes, I'm sure I can."

"My lord," interposed the maid, "the ferns you have gathered contain a great many weeds."

"Be careful! You are trying to cover your own fault by finding fault with others," said Takeo. "But what fine weather this is! It makes me feel splendid."

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"A beautiful sky, indeed! A piece of cloth like that would make a fine gown for a lady," Nami remarked.

"And perhaps even better for a sailor's coat?"

"How fragrant everything smells! Listen, a lark is singing yonder."

"Well, I've had enough to eat. What do you say to work again, Matsu?" said the old nurse to the maid, and they both went off to gather more ferns.

"Be sure and leave some of the ferns, Iku. Isn't she lively for her age, Nami-san?"

"Indeed she is."

"Nami-san, don't you feel tired?"

"No, not a bit to-day. I think I have never had such a good time."

"When I'm at sea, I often come across fine views; but such a beautiful landscape as this from a high hill is especially lovely. Don't you feel refreshed? You see the white glittering wall on the left down there? That is Shibukawa, where we had lunch on our way up. And in this direction you see something that looks like a blue ribbon? That is the River Toné. You see it, don't you? And then, as you follow the slope of Mount Akagi — well, it is where you see smoke rising — way

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down the slope there is something nestling. That is the town of Mayebashi. What is that silvery thread away yonder? That is also the Toné. You can't see any further; it is too hazy. We should have brought a field-glass, shouldn't we, Nami-san? But perhaps the dim and hazy background may be more poetic, after all."

Nami laid her hand on Takeo's knee, and sighed.

"How I would like to be here with you forever!" she said.

Two golden butterflies appeared, and, touching lightly the waving sleeve of Nami, fluttered away; and then a rustling sound as of footsteps over the grass was heard, and suddenly, a shadow fell slantingly before the lovers.

"Takeo-san!"

"Hullo, Chijiwa-kun. How did you happen to find us here?"

The newcomer was a man of about twenty-six, dressed in a lieutenant's uniform. He was exceptionally handsome, even for a soldier, and, singularly enough, his face was not tanned. There was, however, something that marred his good looks; and that was a peculiar sarcastic expression of the mouth and a disagreeable staring of the jet-black

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eyes. This young man, Yasuhiko Chijiwa by name, was a cousin to Takeo, and, though inferior to him in rank, he was nevertheless one of the ablest members in the Headquarters Staff.

"You are surprised to find me here, aren't you? I had some business yesterday at Takasaki, and stayed there overnight. This morning I went to Shibukawa, where I heard that it was only a short distance to Ikao. So I came this way, and called on you at your hotel. They told me you were out fern-gathering, and so I followed here. But I must go back to-morrow. I fear I'm intruding."

"Oh, nothing of the sort. Did you go and see my mother?"

"Yes, I did so yesterday morning. She looked well. But she seemed to be quite anxious for your return." Casting a sharp glance at Nami's face from his jet-black eyes, he added, "Your people at Akasaka are also well."

All this time Nami's face was growing red, and now she colored still more and looked down.

"Look here, now I have got reinforcements," exclaimed Takeo. "I sha'n't be beaten any more. This is a union of the military and the naval forces. Thousands of Amazons can't do us a bit of harm

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now. Why, these women," pointing at the nurse and the maid, who had just returned, "tried to find fault with me when we were alone by saying that I could not gather as many ferns as they, or that I gathered weeds and not ferns."

The old woman started, and slightly knit her brows, as she said: "Chijiwa-sama. What a surprise to see you here!"

"I wired him a short time ago for reinforcements," said Takeo.

"You are joking," said Iku. "Did you, really? So you go back to-morrow?"

"Talking about returning, madam, we must get back before you in time for dinner."

"Yes, that's right. Do so. We are to have Chijiwa-kun with us this evening, and you must have something nice ready. You will find us hungry as wolves. Why, are you going too, Nami-san? You'd better stay with us. Are you trying to get away with your confederates? Don't worry. We won't tease you any more."

Nami could not refuse, and remained while Iku and the maid made up a bundle of the things they had brought with them, and departed.

The three began to hunt for ferns again, and, as it was not too late in the day, they wandered as

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far as Mizusawa-no-Kawannon before turning back to retrace their way down the hill.

The evening sun, resting on the ridge of Mount Monokiki, blazed in its refulgent splendor. The grass on the right and left of the road caught its golden rays and seemed to burn in a single sheet of fire, while shadows of lonely pines here and there measured their long length on the hill. Far away, the distant hills were silently bathing in the flood of light, and the evening smoke of many hearths rose from the villages at their feet. A farmer and his oxen, plodding along, completed the picture, the still evening air resounding with the lowing of the animals at the driver's threats.

Takeo and Chijiwa walked abreast, talking, while Nami followed behind. The three sauntered leisurely, crossed the dell, and approached the uphill road glittering in the sun.

Takeo stopped suddenly.

"Gracious! I have left my cane. It's just where we rested awhile on the way back. Wait a moment, please. I'll get it."

"Let me go with you, dear," said Nami-san.

"No, you had better wait. It is not very far. I'll run all the way."

Takeo almost compelled Nami to stay, and, drop-

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ping the bundle of ferns on the grass, quickly made his way down into the dell.

After Takeo had gone Nami stood silent, a few steps away from Chijiwa. Takeo's figure was now dimly seen on the hill across the dell, but it was soon blotted out of sight at the turning.

"Nami-ko-san!"

Nami, whose face was turned away, shuddered at being spoken to so familiarly.

"Nami-ko-san!" he repeated, drawing nearer.

Nami receded a step or so, but was forced to look up, and, meeting the stare of those jet-black eyes, turned her face away again.

"I congratulate you!"

She was silent; her face grew red.

"I congratulate you! You must be very happy. But," he added, with a scornful tone in his voice, "you know there is one who is not happy."

Nami stood with her eyes on the ground, and tried to stab the grass with the end of her parasol.

"Nami-ko-san!"

Like a squirrel, terrified by the persistent pursuit of a snake, she now faced her foe.

"What is it?"

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"The rank of baron and money — that is not so bad, is it? Why, I congratulate you!"

"What are you talking about?"

"To marry a man of nobility and of fortune even if he is a fool, and to scorn the man in love with her if he has no money, — this is the principle of an upper-class girl nowadays — though, of course, you are an exception."

Gentle as she was, Nami flushed with anger, and looked fiercely at Chijiwa.

"What are you talking about? Repeat that in the presence of Takeo, you coward. To send me such a letter, without first asking my father like a man! I won't endure it any longer."

"What?"

Chijiwa looked black, and, biting his lips, he tried to approach her.

Suddenly the neighing of a horse was heard below, and the head of an old farmer on horseback came into view over the hill.

"Good evening to you," and the rider removed his hat and passed by, looking back over his shoulder and wondering who the young couple might be.

Chijiwa did not move; the rigidity of his face relaxed somewhat, but gave place to the sarcastic twist of his closed lips.

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"H'm, send it back to me if you don't care to keep it."

"Send what back?"

"What you just spoke of. The thing you hate!"

"I haven't it."

"Where is it?"

"I put it in the fire — the filthy thing!"

"Are you sure of that? No one has seen it?"

"Of course not."

"Very sure?"

"Don't speak to me."

The enraged gaze of Nami was met by a fierce and disagreeable stare from Chijiwa's black eyes, which sent a cold shiver through her, and made her turn away. At this moment, at the crest of the hill across the dell, Takeo appeared, his face rosy as a cherry shining in the evening sun.

Nami drew a long breath.

"Nami-ko-san!"

Chijiwa persistently tried to catch Nami's eyes, but they evaded his. Finally he said: "Nami-ko-san, one word before I leave you. Be discreet. Keep the secret, by all means, from Takeo-san, and from your parents as well. If not, you will be sure to repent."

Emphasizing these words with a threatening look,

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Chijiwa turned away and stooped to gather some wild flowers.

With hurried steps and a flourish of his stick, Takeo came up the hill, saying: "Have I kept you waiting long? I am almost out of wind; I've run all the way, you know. But I found the stick all right. Why, Nami-san, what's the matter? You don't look well."

Chijiwa, fixing the violets he had just picked in a knot on his breast, said: "You took so much time in coming back that she was worried with the thought that you might lose your way." And he laughed.

Takeo laughed in return. "Was she? Now let's go home."

Three shadows moved slowly abreast along the ground toward Ikao.

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Chapter IV

The House of Yamaki

IN the corner of a second-class compartment in the 3 P. M. up-train from Takasaki, the only passenger was seated with his legs stretched out on the seat. He was reading a paper while he smoked. It was Yasuhiko Chijiwa.

He threw aside the paper impatiently.

"Pshaw!"

Crushing angrily with his foot the cigarette which had slipped out of his teeth as he spoke, he spat out of the window, and hesitated a moment. Presently, in a mood of indecision, he walked the length of the compartment and then returned to his seat. He folded his arms and shut his eyes, the black eyebrows being drawn close together.

Yasuhiko Chijiwa was an orphan. His father, a Samurai of the Kagoshima clan, had been killed in the War of Restoration. His mother was carried away by a plague when the boy was six years old. He was taken care of by his aunt, sister to his mother and mother to Takeo Kawashima. His aunt was

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kind to Yasuhiko, but his uncle did not treat him at all kindly. On occasions of ceremony Takeo was dressed in a stiff silk skirt and sat in an upper seat, but Chijiwa had nothing on but a cheap cotton one, and had to occupy a lower seat. Thus he was early to learn his position: that, unlike Takeo, who had parents, fortune, and rank, he was destined to work his way with his hands and brain. Naturally, he soon learned to dislike Takeo and to hate his uncle.

He discovered that there were two ways — the broad and the narrow — to succeed in life, and he swore by all means to take the easier road. So, while he was in the Military School, to which his uncle had sent him, and while his classmates were troubling themselves with examinations and grade-marks, Chijiwa was not slow to form acquaintance with influential men from his own province, and was careful to select such friends as would be of benefit to him in the future. His cleverness was first shown soon after his graduation. While others had not yet recovered from their joy at the honors they had won, he had managed to get into the Military Headquarters. Unlike his comrades, who were sent to regiments of infantry here and there and ordered to serve in an endless succession of drills

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and marches, Chijiwa was settled in an enviable position where the secrets of important military affairs might chance to reach one's ears over the social pipe.

The next important problem to him was marriage. He understood that it was only by a good matrimonial alliance that one could succeed in life, just as by the interlocking of limbs monkeys are able to reach water. He surveyed the field, and found that the daughter of this marquis was to be married to that baron, of this count to that high official, and of this millionaire to the son of that marquis. His sharp eyes at last alighted on the house of General Kataoka. Though he was on the reserved list, General Kataoka was a man of wide reputation and of special favor at court. Chijiwa was quick to divine his secret, yet powerful, influence; and he approached him gradually under some slight pretext, and made clever advances toward his family. His eyes were fixed on the eldest daughter, Nami. He chose her because he perceived that Nami was the favorite of the general, while her stepmother did not care for her and wanted to marry her off at the first opportunity.

The selection, however, was not unaided by his love for her quiet and noble demeanor. He watched

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his opportunity. The general was a man who never betrayed his feelings, and so Chijiwa could not easily sound the impression that he had made on him. But he was sure that he had gained the favor of Madam Kataoka. The second daughter, named Koma, who was fifteen years of age and of a forward nature, was also a good friend of his. There were two more children born of the second wife, but these did not concern him. There was, however, an old nurse, Iku, who had served from the days of Nami's mother, and was retained by a special desire of the general when all the rest of the servants had been dismissed with the coming of the present lady. This nurse was always with Nami, and showed little regard for Chijiwa. He felt a little uneasy at this, but made light of it in view of his decision to court Nami directly. Chijiwa waited a year for an opportunity. But he was now impatient, and he boldly prepared a love-letter, sealed it in a double envelope, and, addressing it in a feminine hand, sent it to Nami by post.

On that day he was suddenly ordered to take an official trip. When he returned, after a lapse of three months, he was astounded to find that, in his absence, through the match-making of Viscount Kato, a Member of Upper House, Nami was wedded

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to no less than his own cousin, Takeo Kawashima!

Chijiwa, enraged at this unexpected failure, tore into rags a piece of beautiful crape which he had bought at Kyoto as gift to Nami, in the hope that its bright colors might be an augury of his success.

But Chijiwa was not a man to be utterly crushed by failure, and he soon recovered from his disappointment. He feared, however, that if Nami should tell her father or husband about his love-letter, he would suffer a second loss, and be deprived of an influential patron. Discreet as she was, he was not quite sure of Nami's feeling toward him, and, availing himself of his trip to Takasaki, he visited the newly married couple at Ikao, and slyly investigated matters. One feeling now dominated him, and that was his hatred of Takeo.

Thinking that he heard some one call "Takeo, Takeo," Chijiwa aroused himself suddenly from his reverie. Looking out of the window, he saw that his train had just reached a certain station, and that the porter called "Ageo, Ageo."

"Damn!"

Cursing himself, Chijiwa rose and walked the

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compartment. Shrugging his shoulders as if to shake off something obnoxious, he resumed his seat. A look of scorn was on his eyes and lips.

The train left Ageo, and, after passing several stations with the speed of the wind, it reached Oji. Five or six persons entered the second-class compartment, noisily crunching the gravel on the platform under their heels. Among them was a man of about fifty, with a dark red face, eyes whose ends turned downward, and with a red mole like a pea under his left eye. He was richly dressed in double garments of ichiraku silk, with a heavy gold chain wound around a white crape belt, and he wore a thick gold ring on his right finger.

As he sat down, his eyes casually met those of Chijiwa.

"Oh, Chijiwa-san!"

"Well, how do you do?"

"Where have you been?" As he said this, the man with the red mole arose and sat down next to Chijiwa.

"To Takasaki."

"To Takasaki?" After scanning Chijiwa's face for awhile, the man added, in a low voice: "Are you in a hurry? If not, let's take supper together."

Chijiwa nodded.

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Near the ferry of Hashiba, and hard by the water, there stood a house which, but for the sign reading "Villa owned by Hyozo Yamaki," might have been taken for a fashionable rendezvous. In one of the rooms of the second story, — on whose paper screen a fanciful shimada[1] in silhouette might appropriately appear amidst a seductive strain of music, or over whose greenish mattings a crimson rug might have been spread and cards played thereon, — in such a room, lighted by a shaded lamp, in lieu of the more prosaic electric light, sat at their ease, with glasses and plates lying in disorder, Chijiwa and the Red Mole, who was no other than the master of the house, Hyozo Yamaki.

That no maid was there to wait upon them was apparently intentional. In front of the Red Mole there was a small, open memorandum-book, with a pencil lying across it. The names of many persons, with their addresses and official titles, were written in it. They were marked with such signs as a circle, a square, a triangle, and numerals and letters of the alphabet, some of which were crossed out or had been again restored.

"Well, Chijiwa-san. It is agreed, then. But

[1] Shimada; the head-dress of a Japanese singer, geisha (as here), or of a young unmarried woman.

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I want you to advise me at once when it is arranged. You are quite sure of success?"

"Yes, pretty sure. It's already in the hands of the Minister. But, you know, the other party is also urgent, so you cannot do better than to be liberal." Pointing to the names in the book: "This fellow is a regular knave. You will have to bridle him pretty closely."

"How about this one?"

"He's no good. I don't know him well, but he is said to be very scrupulous. The only way to approach him is to go openly and on your knees. If you don't succeed, take care."

"I tell you, there are many sensible persons in the army, but there are quite as many just the opposite. Last year, you know, when we contracted to supply uniforms to a certain regiment, everything passed quite satisfactorily in the usual way. But there was one captain — what was his name? — with a red mustache. That fellow troubled us a great deal by finding fault with our goods. So when our manager sent him the customary box of cake, he declared that he would not be bribed, and that it would be disgraceful for a soldier to be influenced by presents. And imagine to yourself how he at last threw the box on the floor. You

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see, it was full of silver, with a thin layer of hard cake on the top. What a fix! The autumn-leaf cakes mingling with flakes of silver snow rolled all over the floor! At this, the fellow got still angrier, and, saying that he had never known such a shameful thing, threatened to denounce us publicly. We were barely able to keep him quiet. It was such a hard task. It is on account of such fellows that we have suffered so much trouble. Talking of troublesomeness, Takeo-san is also a man of that character. It's almost impossible to bring him to an understanding. The other day — "

"But Takeo inherited such a fortune from his father that he can afford to do as he pleases — to be upright and stiff as a poker. As for me, you know, being single-handed — "

"Oh, I had forgotten." The Red Mole looked for a moment at Chijiwa's face, and then took out ten bills of five yen each. "This is for your carriage fare. The real thing is to follow."

"Thanks, I accept without reserve," and he put them quickly into his inner pocket. "But, Yamaki-san!"

"Yes?"

"It's a commonplace truth that one can't reap without sowing."

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Yamaki smiled drily. He patted Chijiwa on the back, and said: "You are a smart fellow! It's a pity you are not at least the Chief of Commissariat."

Chijiwa laughed. "But Yamaki, the shorter sword of the hero Kiyomasa is more effective than the three feet three inches[1] of a child."

"Well said! But, my friend, I warn you about this speculation business. An outsider will rarely succeed."

"Oh, well. It is only odd money, you know. But I must go now. I'll see you in a few days. As soon as I know about it. No, thank you; it will be better to take a kuruma on the way."

"Well, then. Sorry my wife can't see you this evening. She has to be with my daughter."

"Oh, O-Toyo-san? Is she sick?"

"Yes, for about a month. That's why my wife brought her here. I tell you, Chijiwa-san, don't take a wife or have children rashly. Nothing is better than a bachelor's life for making money."

Chijiwa then left Yamaki's villa, the master and the maid accompanying him as far as the porch.

Turning from his guest, Yamaki went to his room. Opening the sliding door noiselessly, a middle-aged

[1] Three feet three inches: the length of a large sword.

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woman entered and seated herself by his side. Her complexion was fair, her hair was thin, and she had two prominent front teeth.

"Has Chijiwa-san gone?"

"Yes, he has just left. How is O-Toyo?"

The woman with the prominent front teeth looked grave and said, "I am almost out of patience with her. Kane," speaking to a servant, "you may leave the room for a little while. Why, to-day she again dashed a cup into pieces, rent her clothes, and did many other naughty things at the slightest cause. And she is eighteen years old!"

"After all, we must send her to Sugamo asylum, eh? Poor girl!"

"This is no time for joking. But I really pity her. She said to Take to-day: 'Ungrateful Takeo-san! How cruel he is! I sent him a New Year's gift last year of a pair of worsted socks I knit myself, and a handkerchief I embroidered, and also gloves and other things besides. Last New Year's Day I made him a present of a red worsted shirt, and all this out of my own purse. And, mark you, without the slightest notice to me, he married that ugly, cross, and proud Nami-ko-san. Oh, how cruel, how cruel! I'm a daughter of Yamaki. Why should I be eclipsed by Nami-ko-

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san? How unkind and cruel!' And she wept. My dear, can anything be done for her? She is so much in love with him!"

"Nonsense. 'Like mother like daughter,' as the saying is. You are truly mother to that naughty girl. You know Kawashima is a newly created noble and has a large fortune, and he is in no way a fool. I did what I could to make O-Toyo his wife, but everything came to naught. The marriage is over and the thing is settled. Unless O-Nami-san dies or is divorced, there is no hope. So give up such foolish notions, and try to get her married to some better man. You're an unenterprising woman."

"That's all folly. I cannot think as you do, and I am not so clever as you are — you who at your age of fifty still make a fool of yourself with women —"

"I am by no means a match for your eloquence. But you are indeed f— that is, you easily get angry. I love O-Toyo just as much as you do. She is our daughter. So, instead of dreaming over impossible things, I am trying to find some place where she can be happy all her life. Come, O-Sumi, let us go and talk to her a little while." They went together through a corridor to Toyo's room.

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Hyozo Yamaki was a man of obscure origin, but he was now counted a "gentleman-merchant." At the beginning of his career, he had received no little favor from the deceased father of Takeo, and he still remained faithful to the Kawashima family. This, some averred, was due to the fact that the Kawashima House was one of the richest among the new nobility, but such criticism was too exacting. He had his residence in Shiba, and a villa near the Hashiba Ferry. Formerly he had been somewhat of a usurer, but now his chief business was as a contractor to the army and other government departments. His son was now in America for a commercial education, while his daughter Toyo had till lately been attending the Peeress's school. His wife — no one knew where and how he came to marry her — was only known as a Kyotonian. She was a homely woman, and some even wondered how Yamaki could remain satisfied with her. But the fact was that he had several mistresses to whom such adjectives as charming, lovely, and the like could be applied, and who were constantly awaiting his visits. And of this his wife was well aware.

In the alcove a harp, a mandolin, and a glass box containing a large doll are placed. In one corner

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there is a beautiful writing-table, and in another a cheval-glass. Wondering what peeress might be the occupant of this beautiful room, you are tempted to look at a bed, all in silk, placed in the middle. On it a girl of about seventeen is lying on her side, tossing wildly her corn-silk hair in a large shimada. Her complexion is rosy, and her cheeks are full and round. You might imagine from this that she was pretty, but, as a matter of fact, her features are altogether too rotund. Her lips are parted as if she were too weary to close them, and the eyes under her delicate eyebrows are surrounded by superfluous flesh, and look as if, veiled in a spring haze, they had just awakened from a preëxistent sleep.

Ejaculating "Fool!" to the maid who had just left the room, laughing in her sleeve at her mistress's commands, the girl feverishly threw off the bed-clothes, got out of bed, and took from the alcove a large picture, in which a group of schoolgirls were represented in uniform hakama. She looked earnestly at it with eyes slender as a thread; and then snapped her fingers at the face of one of the figures. To show her dislike still more, she scratched the picture with her finger-nail.

The sliding door was heard to open.

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"Who is it? Take?"

"Yes, I am Take, — a bald-headed Take," and, laughingly, her father Yamaki and her mother came in and sat by the bed. The girl tried to conceal the picture, and bent over in a half-reclining posture.

"How do you feel, O-Toyo? Better? What is it that you hid just now? Let me see. Let me see. Let — me — see — what — it — is? This is Nami-ko-san's face, isn't it? Mercy! How you have spoilt it! A hundred times wiser to offer a cursing prayer at some shrine in the dead of night than do such a naughty thing."

His wife, making a wry face, exclaimed: "Don't suggest such a thing!"

"O-Toyo, you are a daughter of Hyozo Yamaki, aren't you? Be brave, and try your luck again. Instead of remaining faithful to such a petty fellow who does not return your love, my dear child, make bold to catch a millionaire's son, such as Mitsui, or Mitsubushi, or the son of a marshal, a prime minister, or, better than that, some foreign prince. How can you be so spiritless?"

Fret and cry as she did in the presence of her mother, her Ladyship O-Toyo was utterly helpless before her father. She remained moody, and made no answer.

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"No answer, my child? You can't forget Takeo-san? Well, well, you still love him, do you?" Say, O-Toyo, wouldn't you like to go and see Kyoto for a change? It is such a pleasant trip! There are many interesting sights worth seeing, and, besides, you may go to Nishijin, a famous weaving district, and get a beautiful obi or triple robes. How would you like that? You can't afford to miss it, can you? It's a long time since you were there, O-Sumi," he said, turning to his wife. "You had better go with O-Toyo."

"You will go with us, I suppose?" she asked him.

"I? Oh, nonsense. You don't know how busy I am."

"Then I sha'n't go, either."

"How is that? You don't mean to obey me?"

"Ha, ha."

"What?"

"Ha, ha, ha."

"I don't like to hear you laugh like that. Tell me why you won't go."

"I can't let you out of my sight," said his wife.

"Pshaw! How dare you say such a thing before O-Toyo? O-Toyo, what your mother says is false. Don't pay any attention to it."

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"You can't play the hypocrite with me," O-Sumi rejoined.

"A truce to such talk. But come, O-Toyo, don't worry. Cheer up. Have patience, and all will come right."

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Chapter V

The General at Home

ON a Saturday afternoon in the middle of June, when the chestnut-trees by his house at Akasaka were in bloom, the Viscount Lieutenant-General Kataoka was sitting comfortably in his study-chair. He was not much over fifty, but his forehead was somewhat bald and his hair was turning gray. His corpulent body weighed about two hundred pounds, and even an Arab courser would be likely to sweat under him. His thick neck was almost buried in his square shoulders, and his double chin seemed joined to his breast. His abdomen was large, his thighs thick as those of an ox. His face was brown, his nose large, his lips thick, his beard scanty, and his eyebrows thin. His eyes, however, out of harmony to the rest of his body, were narrow like those of an elephant, and mild to look upon. There was also a smile lurking constantly about his mouth, giving a humorous cast to his countenance.

It happened that in the fall of some years ago, the general was hunting in a hilly district. He was clad in his ordinary clothes, and, chancing to ask for

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a cup of tea at a small hut where an old woman was living alone, she carefully surveyed him and expressed her admiration.

"How big you are! You've shot some game, I suppose?"

The general smilingly said: "No, not any."

"Oh, you can't make a living out of hunting. Work as a day-laborer with your big body, I tell you, and you could make fifty yen."

"In a month?"

"Oh, no! In a year, of course. But come and get to work. I'll let you have a job any time."

"Well, thank you. I may come again and ask your advice."

"Do so, by all means. Your big body is too good to waste on hunting."

This humorous incident was one of the favorite anecdotes with which he amused his friends. By one unacquainted with the man, he might be judged no better than the old woman judged him. But to one who knew him well, this self-reliant soldier was a living wall of iron in times of trouble. His body massive as a little hill, and his spirit serene as that of the gods, would make easy the hearts of a host of soldiers, trembling before impending danger.

On the table near by was placed a blue pot of

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straight-growing dwarf bamboos. High up on the walls were hung pictures of the emperor and empress; lower, and on the farther side, was hung a tablet on which were two characters, written by Nanshu, signifying "Be Charitable." On the bookcase some rows of books; on the mantelpiece and on the triangular shelf, in one corner, a half-dozen pictures of Japanese and foreigners, some of whom were in uniform.

The green curtains being drawn aside, the six windows on the east and south were opened wide. To the east, over across the crowded streets of Tami-machi below, the eye could command the leafy hill of Reinan, over which the spire of the Atago Tower raised its tiny head. A kite was seen circling over it. To the south there lay a garden shaded by blooming chestnut-trees, and through an opening in them could be seen a poplar in the compound of the Hikawa Shrine, resembling a green spear.

The early summer sky, as seen from the windows, shone like blue satin. Here and there, among the fresh leaves, creamy tassel-like chestnut blossoms bloomed in profusion, painted against the azure of the sky. One branch jutted out near the window. Ungraceful as it was, it was loaded with flowers, like epaulets, and its leaves, filtering the light of

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the sun, broke it into rays of emerald, sapphire, and amber. At the slightest breath of wind the fragrance was wafted stealthily into the study, and the lavender shadows from the window danced over a page of the "Present Condition of the Siberian Railroad," held in the general's left hand. Closing for a moment his narrow eyes, he drew a breath, and then turned them, as they slowly opened, to the pamphlet.

Somewhere outside, the sound of a well-pulley was heard like the rolling of a bowl, but it soon stopped. The quiet of the afternoon now settled upon the house, when suddenly two little rogues were seen looking for a chance to steal into the house.

Through the slightly opened door they stealthily thrust in their heads, and then drew them back. Then the sound of tittering was heard outside. One of them was a boy of about eight, dressed in a sailor suit, and the other was a girl, younger by two or three years, with her hair long over her brow, and clad in purple striped clothes with a red obi.

The two little rogues hesitated awhile, but, as if unable to wait any longer, they threw the door open, burst into the room, and, easily scaling the fortress of piled papers and attacking the general's

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chair straight ahead, captured the knees of the massive soldier, the Sailor from the right, and the Ringlet from the left.

"Papa!"

"School out, eh?" the general smilingly said, with a voice deep from his chest, as, with his heavy hands, he patted the Sailor on his back and the Ringlet on her head.

"How about the test? Good?"

"Papa, I — I got A in arithmetic."

"Papa, teacher said my needlework was good."

The Ringlet took out her kindergarten work and placed it on her father's knees.

"Ah! That's good!"

"And then, B in writing and reading, and the rest all C. I was beaten at last by Mina-kami. I feel very bad over that."

"Well, keep at it. What story did you read to-day?"

The Sailor, brightening up, said: "Papa, the story of Masatsura. I like Masatsura so much. Which is greater, Masatsura or Napoleon?"

"Oh, both are great."

"Papa, I like Masatsura, but I like the navy better. Papa is in the army, and I am going into the navy."

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The general laughed. "You will be a sailor under Takeo-san?"

"Why, he is an ensign. I want to be lieutenant-general."

"They don't call it so in the navy; it's rear admiral. But won't you be admiral?"

"But papa is lieutenant-general. Papa, lieutenant-general is greater than ensign, isn't it?"

"Ensign or general, he who studies most is the greatest."

"Papa, papa, say — papa," and the Ringlet, jumping on her father's knee, exclaimed: "Teacher told us such a good story — the story of a rabbit and a tortoise. Shall I tell you about it? Once upon a time there were a rabbit and a tortoise — Ah, here comes mamma."

As the clock struck two, a tall lady of about forty came into the room. Her hair was dressed in foreign style, her bang being curled and parted on her high brow. Her large eyes were set a little obliquely, bespeaking her rather acrimonious temper. Her somewhat dark face was slightly painted, and the teeth, seen at times, were polished to the last degree. She was dressed in showy crape, with an obi of black satin, and she wore valuable rings.

"You are again hanging on your papa."

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"Why, I was just asking about their school work. Well, now it is time for papa's lesson. You go out and play. We all will go for a walk afterward."

"Oh, how nice!" said the Ringlet.

"Hurrah!" shouted the Sailor.

The two children, hand in hand, dancing for joy, went out of the room, and the cries of "Hurrah," "Let me, Ki-chan," were heard far off.

"Say what you will, you are too lenient with your children."

The general said, smiling: "No, not exactly. But children thrive better when they are loved."

"But, my dear, you know 'severe father' and 'kind mother' are coupled together even in popular notion. But, since you fondle them so much, the saying is reversed, and I have always to correct them. Dear me, I alone am made an object of dislike."

"Well, you need not reproach me like that. And pray, be a little milder. Well, professor, have a seat, if you please."

The general, laughing, took up an old copy of the Royal Third Reader from the table, and began to read slowly in his queer English with the Satsuma accent.

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The lady listened attentively, and corrected an occasional error.

This was the general's daily lesson. Having raised himself as a soldier at the Restoration of 1868, he at once found himself entered upon such an important career that no time remained in which to indulge in the study of foreign languages. It was only in the last year that he was transferred to the reserved list. Some of the leisure hours thus obtained he devoted at once to reading English. For teacher, Madam Shige was at hand. She was a daughter of a noted Choshu Samurai, and had been in London so long that a better English scholar was seldom to be found in Japan. The lady was so thoroughly imbued with Western ideas that she wanted to conduct the management of her household affairs just as she had seen and learned in that far-off land. But, unluckily, things generally fell short of her endeavor, the servants laughed in their sleeves at her inexperience, and the children naturally made much of their generous father alone. These mistakes, and the Oriental high-mindedness of her husband, who never cared for trifling matters, often put the poor lady frightfully out of humor.

At last, by severe effort, the general finished reading one page and was about to translate it,

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when the door opened and there entered a pretty girl of about fifteen, with her hair tied with a red ribbon. Seeing her father holding a small book in his large hand and reading it with the docility of a pupil, she involuntarily laughed as she announced:

"Mother, Aunt Kato is in the sitting-room."

"Is she?"

The lady, knitting her brows almost imperceptibly, waited for the general to speak.

The general, raising himself deliberately and drawing a chair to his side, said: "Show her in here."

"Good afternoon," said an attractive-looking lady of about forty-five, as she entered the room. She wore blue glasses, presumably on account of her weak sight. She looked somewhat like Nami-san, and not without reason, for she was sister of the first wife of General Kataoka. She was married to Viscount Kato, member of Upper House, and it was she who, with her husband, acted as go-between in the marriage of Nami and Takeo.

Smiling, the general gave her a chair and drew the little curtain at the window opposite it, saying: "Please have a seat. I haven't seen you for a long time. Your husband is pretty busy, I suppose?"

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"Oh, yes. He is just like a gardener, always shears in hand. It's a little early for irises, but the pomegranate-trees, of which he is very proud, are in full bloom, and the roses are still blooming. Please come and see them. He especially wishes me to ask you to come." Turning to Madam Kataoka. "And bring Ki-chan and Mi-chan with you."

To be frank, the viscountess did not like Madam Kato very much. Owing to the difference in education and temperament, a mutual understanding was almost out of the question. Moreover, the idea that she was sister to the first wife always came up in the viscountess's mind and caused her much uneasiness. She herself wanted to monopolize the general's heart and wield the sceptre as queen of the household. But here was a sister of the former wife, who not only brought before the general the very picture of her now gone, but by stealthily sympathizing with Nami and nurse Iku, reminded him of times past, and, by reviving the memory of the dead one in many ways, tried to fight for supremacy. This was what she could not bear. Now that Nami and Iku were gone, the right of exterritoriality had been removed, to her great satisfaction, but as often as she saw the face

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of Madam Kato, she felt as if the dead one had risen from the grave to contend with her for her husband, her authority as mistress, and the system and management of every household matter that she had planned so carefully.

Madam Kato took out some confectionery from her silk bag.

"With my love to Ki-chan and Mi-chan. Is school not yet out? I don't see them. Oh, I see." Giving an artificial flower-pin to the girl with the red ribbon, who had just come in with cups of tea, "With my love to Koma-san."

"Thank you for all of them. They will be so pleased."

Thus saying, Madam Kataoka laid the confectionery on the table. At this moment a servant announced that a man from the Red Cross Society wanted to see the mistress, and she immediately left the room. On going out she beckoned to the girl, and whispered something into her ear. The girl came back stealthily, and placed herself behind a curtain within hearing, while the lady went through the corridor on her way to the parlor.

The red-ribboned Koma was a daughter of the first wife, but was much loved by the viscountess, while her sister Nami was not. The viscountess

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took the silent and reserved Nami for an obstinate and morose girl, and was pleased with the younger sister, whose forward nature was quite in harmony with her own. And, in order to give an indirect snub to Nami, and also to show the world what a stepmother could do, she favored Koma as her husband favored Nami. It is usual for a self-willed man to do as he likes without deference to others, but, on the other hand, he is apt to be uncritical. Such a man always loves to be thought well of, while he never desists from the pursuit of self-interest. No one is so fond of flattery as he. Madam Kataoka was a refined and spirited lady who in argument always got the better of her husband, so renowned for his military skill, but, unlike him, who gained friendship wherever he was, she was always left alone, and in her loneliness she welcomed those who hung upon her sleeve. Blunt and artless servants were dismissed one by one, while their places were filled with courteous, honey-tongued ones. Koma-san had, of course, no reason to dislike her sister, but, finding that her stepmother loved to hear her speak ill of Nami, she contracted the bad habit of telling tales, and at times caused Iku to make a wry face. This, however, seemed to be of some use to the viscountess, who, occasionally, even after

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the marriage of Nami, made her render service in petty affairs like this.

Standing close by the second window on the east veranda, Koma could hear the hoarse laugh of her father alternate with the ringing laugh of her aunt. But soon the voices grew low, the words faint, and the more indistinctly the words "mother-in-law," "Nami-san," and like phrases came through the window, the more attentively the red-ribboned girl listened.

"A host of foes one million told
Now come from out the land so vast,
What need Kam'kura men so bold
To fear, not beaten for ages past?"

The little Sailor who came marching along singing this song was at once attracted to the Red Ribbon standing still on the veranda. In spite of her endeavor to express her meaning by covering her mouth, shaking her head, or turning her back on him, he rushed forward, calling, "Koma-chan!" and asked what she was doing. She still tried to silence him, but, being annoyed with so many "Whats?" she cried aloud "Fie!" unwittingly; upon which she ran away hurriedly, shrugging her shoulders at her untimely mishap.

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"Ah, you coward!"

Saying this, the Sailor proceeded to his father's study, and, on seeing his aunt, made a smiling bow, and went at once to his father's knees.

"Well, my dear Ki-chan! You seem to have grown taller since I saw you last. You go to school every day?—You did? A in arithmetic? Good. Come and see aunty, with your papa and mamma.

"Where is Michi? Look, here's aunty's present. You like it, don't you?" Giving him the cake, the general added: "Do you know where mamma is? Still in the parlor? Tell her aunty must go."

The general, seeing the child leaving, and looking at the visitor thoughtfully, said: "Well, then, be sure and arrange about Iku without trouble, please. I feared at first that the matter would turn out in this way. I should not have sent her, but it was Nami's desire as well as hers. Yes, exactly. Well, now you understand what I want?"

The conversation was interrupted by the coming of Madam Kataoka, who, glancing at Madam Kato, said: "You are leaving us so soon? I'm very sorry I was called away by the visitor. No, he has just gone. Why, it was about the Charity Bazar

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again. Not much to be made out of it, I fear. Must you go now? Please give my love to Chizu-ko-san. I miss her very much since Nami went."

"She has not been well, and has neglected her calls for a long time. Good-by."

"Good-by."

"I will go with you a little way," said the general. — "Well, just a little. Come on, Ki and Mi — now for a walk!"

Madam Kataoka, seating herself in an easy-chair in the sitting-room and looking over the prospectus of the Charity Bazar, nodded to Koma.

"Koma-san, what was the talk about?"

"Well, mamma, I could not hear well, but it was something about Iku."

"Iku?"

"Yes, it was like this. Takeo-san's old mother has been ill on account of rheumatism, and is very irritable. One day Iku happened to be talking to Nami-san in her room. 'Why is the old lady so peevish?' she said. 'I pity you, madam, for that. But, as she is old, it will not be long before she dies.' Wasn't Iku foolish to say such a thing, mamma?"

"She is always making mischief, the meddling old woman!"

"And just at that moment the old lady happened

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to be passing by the room, heard all Iku said, and was very angry."

"There! That's the penalty of eavesdropping."

"She was so angry that Nami-san was greatly troubled, and went to see Aunt Kato."

"To see aunt?"

"Nami-san always sees her aunt about everything."

The lady smiled drily.

"And what else?"

"Then father said that he would send Iku away to take care of the villa."

"Did he?" she remarked, uneasily. "Is that all?"

"I would have listened to more, but Ki-chan came just then, and —"

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Chapter VI

The Mother-in-Law

TAKEO'S mother's name was Kei, and she was now fifty-three. With the exception of frequent attacks of rheumatism, she was very healthy. It was said that she could readily cover on foot the distance of ten miles each way between her house and the cemetery where her husband was buried. She weighed over a hundred and fifty pounds, and there were few ladies of nobility who exceeded her in this respect. Her corpulency, however, began after the death of her husband, Michitake, some six years ago, for before that event she was pale and as lean as a rake. Some observed jestingly that she must be a sort of rubber ball which swelled up as soon as the pressure was removed.

Her late husband was a petty Samurai of the Kagoshima clan, and he was pretty badly off at the time of his marriage. But he came into prominence in the Restoration War, and was for a long time a successful local governor under the Okubo Ministry. He had, however, a very wilful nature,

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which cut him off from friendly intercourse with all of his associates except a few, of whom the Viscount Kato was one. After Okubo was gone, he did not enjoy much public confidence. He was created baron simply because, as they say, he was lucky enough to have been born in that favored quarter, Kagoshima. Thus Michitake the opinionist and Tartar always drank away his irrepressible discontent, and when, after draining five bowlfuls of saké, each holding about a pint, he faced the local assembly with his shoulders drawn back and his face red as a demon, there was not a soul in the assembly who dared oppose him.

Such a miserable household as Kawashima's was rarely to be met with. The whole house was under the despotic rule of a tyrant, and the family lived as if in a thunder-storm under a tall tree unprotected by a lightning-rod. With the exception of Takeo, who, in his childhood, had made his father's knees his dancing-place and knew no better playmate than he, no one, neither his wife nor the servants, nor even the pillars of the sitting-room, was unacquainted with the pain the master's hand had inflicted upon them. Even Yamaki, now well known as a "gentleman merchant," was an occasional recipient of this gift; but, of course, he

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never refrained from calling on the Kawashima family, thinking that this was rather a cheap toll considering the gain he became entitled to through his favor or disfavor — whichever you please.

When it was rumored that his lordship was out of humor, even a mouse in the kitchen would stop gnawing, and if his angry voice, like a sudden thunder-clap, was heard from the interior of the house, even a dull servant was wont to drop her knife from the shock. It is said that the subordinate officers who wanted to see him had first to find out from the servants in which quarter the wind lay.

Think what an enormous amount of patience was required of Madam Kei, his mate for nearly thirty years! While her husband's parents were living, she saw nothing very extraordinary in his nature as compared with theirs, but, once they were gone, one at the heels of the other, the real character of her husband was brought boldly into relief, and her patience was tried to the extreme. At first she offered some resistance, but she soon learned that it was all to no purpose. She no longer showed a bold front, but either wisely submitted like a bent reed before the wind, or else did what is said to be the crowning method of safeguard — took to flight.

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In the meantime she came to understand somewhat how to turn the tide, and was successful at least in every third attempt, but the nature of her husband remained without a shadow of change. The last three or four years of his life were especially spent in such a fury of passion, inflamed by alcoholic draughts, that, fortified as she was by the experience of over twenty years, she felt deeply the bitterness of her miserable life. Not unfrequently forgetting her dear son Takeo and her gray hairs, she would even think she preferred the peaceful life of a poor sexton's wife to the enviable honor of being a viscountess and wife to a governor. But time went by swiftly as an arrow, and thirty years had already passed when she beheld her heartless husband Michitake lying stark in his coffin with his lifeless face turned toward heaven. She drew a long breath — and yet, poor soul, the tears ran freely down her cheeks.

She wept, but she was relieved, and with her freer breath there came to her something of power. While her husband was alive she was almost of no importance by the side of the corpulent and loud-voiced man. But now she walked out of her corner and, lo, instantly she swelled and broadened to the full size of the house. Those who used to

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notice her shyness by the side of her husband, remarked that the change was simply wonderful. According, however, to the view of a certain scholar, man and wife become more and more alike, both mentally and physically, with increasing years. True or no, such was really the case with her whose build, carriage, roughness, and, above all, quick temper were nothing but a copy of the ways of her deceased husband.

"To kill at Nagasaki one's enemy at Yedo" — so runs a common saying stating a peculiar law of action and reaction in nature. An anti-government member of Parliament may make a very eloquent attack in the House against the government. It is all very fine, but how few realize that one-half of his fire is called forth to satisfy his vengeance on the usurer who drove him hard the night before. Again, a low atmospheric depression in the South China Sea causes a flood in the central part of Japan, and land-slides in the depth of Tuscarora cause tidal waves along the coasts. Nature is only seeking a balance. And, in securing this balance, a mean fellow, so says one well versed in human affairs, proceeds just as a miser duns for a debt, impatient at the delay of even a single day, while a great man, trusting his whole account to the management

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of Heaven's Bank, simply does his part with heart and soul. Mark further the way a low-minded person seeks his balance. As if he were mere matter, he follows the law of motion; that is, to attack where the resistance is least.

Madam Kawashima, whose patience had been taxed to the utmost for thirty long years, thought that she was now to have her day, and no sooner was the lid of her husband's coffin closed than she opened once for all the flood-gates which had withstood the pressure of her patience. The one whom she had most dreaded was now gone, and there was no more fear that his detestable hand would rest heavily upon her again. She now appeared as if she wished to show that she had not been silent because of her own helplessness, and, wishing it clear that she thought herself his better half, she began to dun those people to whom money had been loaned at one time or other, the amount becoming considerable by years of neglect. There was, however, a great difference in the nature of their irritability: the deceased baron was a man of heroic spirit, and, though troublesome, his anger had a dash of something that was almost pleasing; but the temper of his wife, who was selfish, suspicious, and narrow-minded, and totally devoid of manful audacity, was

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simply unbearable, and the servants had by far the harder time of it.

And this was Nami's mother-in-law.

To every young bride there comes soon after her marriage a trial due to her still unsettled mental state of newly imposed wifehood. The marumagé, which only the decorum of married life requires, may be put aside for any other fashion of dressing the hair. Nevertheless, it is not unlikely that an uninformed kuruma-man might, for safety's sake, address her as "miss," a form of salutation certainly embarrassing to a woman who has not courage enough to explain the mistake. At home, however, she will be worried by the servants with a "madam," an appellation which is yet too much for her. But soon she realizes her new situation, and begins to see in their true light her surroundings, hitherto only dimly understood through the misty veil of her bashfulness. It was at this stage of her life that Nami had now arrived.

Since customs differ greatly with each family, it was incumbent upon her that she should not measure her new home by the standard of the old, and that she must not forget that Nami Kataoka was gone, and that henceforth she must become a

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new Nami Kawashima — these were the words her father uttered with heartfelt tenderness when she was in her wedding-dress and the carriage was waiting for her departure. She remembered the advice too well, and, on finding herself in her new home, she saw that the contrast was something amazing.

The property of the house of Kawashima exceeded perhaps in value that of her paternal home. The house was counted one of the greatest among the new nobility, for the wealth amassed during the governorship of Takeo's father was immense. She found, however, that, while the Kataoka family was so popular owing to the fame of her father, and that there things looked bright as the sunrise, here everything was stagnant as a pool of water. The relatives were few, the acquaintances were not many, and even those who used to call while Takeo's father was alive kept away after his death. Moreover, the widow was not sociable in any sense, while the master who was to establish the prestige of the house was yet young and low in official rank, and stayed most of his time away from home. Again Nami's stepmother loved anything gay and novel, and of course she was particularly at home in lecturing on housekeeping. She practised economy in a strange way, evoking at times the criticism of the servants

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whose common sense was fully developed in matters of every-day usage. But say what you will, as is usual with the intercourse among military men, everything there was on the whole showy and quite extravagant. But what a difference here at her new abode! The old usages and rather coarse country customs were adhered to closely, as if they were the only usages in the world. The widow's methods of housekeeping remained just as they were thirty years ago, when she was the wife of a poor Samurai. And the habit of managing everything by herself, done formerly out of necessity, had grown into a second nature. Making a certain Tazaki — a plain, honest fellow who had been no more than a mere domestic — her steward, she herself calculated the monthly expenses in fire-wood, charcoal, and so forth, item by item. Such being the case, when Iku came with Nami as her maid, the widow was heard to say, in surprise: "What airs these illustrious families put on!" Indeed, the expulsion of Iku might not be due wholly to the widow's wrath at her slanderous remark.

Bright as she was, the bride was still young, and there is little wonder that she lacked the tact to face so suddenly the widely different customs of her new home. But Nami understood well the full import

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of her father's counsel, and made up her mind to resign herself to the new situation. An opportunity to put her determination to the test was near at hand.

Not long after his return from Ikao, Takeo was ordered on a cruise. Married to a sailor, Nami was quite prepared for an occasional absence, but a parting in so short a time after their union almost broke her heart, and she was left for a while quite stupefied.

Nami's father met Takeo before the engagement, and liked him very much. She took her father at his word and married. And the result proved that she was right. She found Takeo a manful and high-minded man, frank to the core and loving in heart, a man in whom there was not a particle of meanness, a very miniature of her dear father. Yes, even his manner of walking, with bold step and rocking gait, and his laughter, like that of a child, were but a copy of her father. How happy, she thought, to be with such a good husband. And so she loved him with her whole heart. Takeo, on his part, felt unbounded love toward such a loving creature, and, being an only child, he felt as if he were given a sister as well as a wife, and caressed her as his own dear "Nami-san." Three

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months had not elapsed since their marriage, but they loved each other as if they had been acquainted from the previous world, and the sadness of their parting, though temporary, was to both almost unbearable.

But Nami was not allowed to weep long over her sorrow. Soon after Takeo's departure, her mother-in-law had a severe attack of rheumatism, and her characteristic irascibility was much increased. And after Iku was gone, poor Nami had specially a hard time of it.

A new cadet is teased for a time by the older ones, but, after a year or so, he himself finds no greater pleasure than to tease freshmen coming after him. A mother-in-law who knows only too well the painful experience she had when she first joined the family, should not, on principle, treat a bride with injustice. But such is the frailty of human nature that, when the flower of her youth has faded away and she finds herself transplanted to the position of mother-in-law, her tyrannical nature gets the upper hand and she becomes the very mother-in-law she so much detested.

"Look here, you have made a mistake in the width of the gore. Make it four inches and turn it in like this. Tchut! dear me!" she will say to a

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bride, "that is not the way. Here, let me have it. Bless my heart, you must have been sleeping all these twenty years. And you mean to be a wife! Eh?" If she can find in this situation something that brings before her the horror of a bygone sarcastic voice and look, once real to her even as it is real now to the one before her, she may feel sorry for it and even try secretly to make amends, — such a woman may still be said to be heaven-born. But not a few are ruled by the principle of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and try to avenge on the bride of Nagasaki the wrong done to them by the mother-in-law of Yedo. And thus they unconsciously seek retribution during their own life. The mother-in-law of Nami was this sort of person.

To work under the eyes of the Europeanized stepmother, and again to suffer at the hands of the old-fashioned mother-in-law — such was the lot of poor Nami. Many a time Nami offered her service out of pure and sincere sympathy for the old widow in her sick-bed, who wanted a maid too often. Being unfamiliar with the task, however, her tender efforts would be scarcely satisfactory to the patient. The widow, then, thanking Nami at one moment, would purposely scold the maid at the next with such a

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loud and almost savage voice as to terrify Nami, accustomed as she had been for ten years to the sarcastic eloquence of her stepmother. This, however, was but for the first few weeks; after that, the attack was directed straight at Nami. When Iku, the only sympathetic soul in the house, had gone, she felt at times as if she had returned to the sunless corner of her past days. But when she went to her room and saw on the table in a silver frame the silent picture of the robust officer, all other feelings would give way to the one which gained in tenderness as she took it up in her hand. She would feast her eyes on it, kiss it, fondle it, and whisper to it, as if she could be heard: "Come back soon, dearest!" For his dearest sake she could willingly quaff the bitterest cup, and, denying herself, minister unto her mother-in-law.

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Chapter VII

On Duty

"Hongkong, July —, ——.

"Dearest Nami: — I write this to you in a heat of ninety-nine degrees, with myself in a reeking perspiration. You read my letter posted at Saseho, I believe. Since weighing anchor there, the weather was fine day after day, and so hot that even we, the sailors of the Invincible Islands, had to give in a little bit. About a dozen of our officers and men suffered from sunstroke, but I am all right; have never once been an inmate of the sick-ward. By being burnt by the broiling sun near the equator, my dark complexion has got such a finish as to surprise even me. On landing to-day I went to a barber-shop and looked carelessly into a glass, when, lo, there stood a new man! One of my merry comrades suggested to me to send you my picture in my present condition, but of course I don't want to do that. It being fine all the way (except once when we were overtaken by a monsoon), we all arrived safely here yesterday morning amidst ringing cheers.

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"At Saseho I got your loving letter, which I read and re-read. I was sorry to learn that my mother has been attacked by her old malady. But I feel very much at ease this year, since you are with her. I wish you would look after her in my place. When sick, she is specially hard to please, and I very much sympathize with you in your difficult task.

"I trust the folks at Akasaka are all well. How about Uncle Kato? Still busy with shears in hand? Nurse Iku has gone, I understand. I don't know how it was, but I feel very sorry it happened so. Give her my love when you write, and tell her that I shall bring her many souvenirs. I am very fond of her. She is very jolly, and I suppose you miss her, too. Do Aunt Kato and Chizu-ko-san call on you occasionally?

"Chijiwa comes often, I hear. We have few relatives, of whom Chijiwa is one, and I know mother thinks much of him. To be cordial to him is to please mother. He is a bright and smart fellow, and I hope he may be of help to you in case of need. . . .

"Yours most affectionately,

"TAKEO.

"P. S. Please read the enclosed letter to mother.

"P. S. Will stay here for a few days. After

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buying provisions, etc., will sail for Sidney, *via* Manila, and then to San Francisco by way of New Caledonia, Fiji, and then home by way of Hawaii. Expect to be back this fall.

"P. S. Send letters, care of Japanese Consul, San Francisco, U. S. A."

"SIDNEY, August —, ——.

"DEAREST NAMI: — . . . Last May I was at Ikao with Nami-san gathering ferns; now I am at Sidney, far down in the Southern Hemisphere. As I look up at the Southern Cross at night and dwell upon the days gone by, I cannot help thinking how changeable the world we live in is. When I was cruising last year I was occasionally seasick, but this time I am surprised to find myself so well. A strange and new feeling is my constant companion on this voyage. When I am alone on the bridge on duty, and look up at the dark southern skies studded with myriads of diamonds, this feeling is especially strong, and I seem to see before my eyes your lovely face. Don't laugh at my folly. Among my comrades I feign to be careless and sing with them, 'What care we for tears at home, for feats so bold,' but (please don't laugh) a picture of Nami-san is always in my inner pocket. Even while

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I am writing I see clearly the figure of one who will read this in the small room at home, overshadowed by the palm-trees. . . .

"At Sidney Bay there are many families yachting for pleasure. A thought comes over me that when we succeed in life and Nami-san and I are gray-headed, we shall own a large yacht of at least five thousand tons displacement. I shall be captain, and our sons and grandsons will be the sailors, and we shall sail the four seas. We shall come to Sidney, and I shall tell you, then a white-headed Nami, the dreams a young naval officer had in the years gone by. . . .

"Yours most affectionately,

"TAKEO."

"TOKYO, —— —, ——.

"MY DEAREST TAKEO: — I read over and over with such interest your loving letter dated Hong-kong, July 15th. I am so glad that you are so well in spite of the hot weather. Mother is getting well, and I hope you will feel at ease about her. I spend my lonely days in one way or another. I try to please mother, especially since you are away, but I am so dull that I am sorry to say my effort falls

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far short of my wishes. I am looking impatiently to the day when I shall see you safe home again.

"The folks at Akasaka are all well. They have gone to the villa at Zushi. The Katos went to Okitsu, and we are left very lonely at Tokyo. Iku is also at Zushi, and is doing well. I wrote her about your wishes, and she thanked me in tears for your kindness.

"I have come to feel that I have left several important things unlearned. The management of domestic affairs, which my father counselled me to take special interest in, I neglected at the time, and am now much worried about my inefficiency. I wanted to follow your advice to study English; but I am afraid that mother will not think well of me if I sit at the desk too much. So at present I am devoting myself altogether to housekeeping. I hope you will not think I am neglecting my studies without cause. I am ashamed of myself, but sometimes I feel so sad and lonely and want to see you so much that if I had the wings of a dove I would immediately fly to you. My only consolation is your picture and that of your ship. I did not pay much attention to universal geography while at school, but now I take out an almost forgotten

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map and take a great deal of pleasure in tracing the progress of your ship. Sometimes I wish I had been born a man and could be a sailor, for then I could be with you on all your cruises. Do pity my foolishness, dearest, for my thoughts are all for you. I have not noticed heretofore the weather indications in the paper, but now I look for them every day, and, though I know that you are sailing far beyond the places they cover, I feel very anxious for you when there is warning of high winds. I hope you will take good care of yourself. . . .

"Your loving wife,

"NAMI."

"TOKYO, October —, ——.

"MY DEAREST TAKEO: — Dreaming of you every night, I long to see you very much. Last night I thought I went with you to Ikao by ship to gather ferns, when somebody came in between us, and, while you were fading away into the distance, I fell overboard. I cried out and mother woke me up. I was greatly relieved to find it was only a dream. But still there is something that seems to trouble me. So I am very anxious for your speedy return. Wishing to talk over everything personally, I watch every day the eastern sky in your

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direction. This letter may cross you on the way, but I am sending it to you at Honolulu. . . .

"Your loving wife,

"NAMI."

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Book Two

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Chapter I

Home Life

THE widow Kawashima, who was warming herself at the fireplace and looking over her shoulder at the clock which had just struck eight, muttered: "Eight! They ought to be back by this time." She then reached slowly for a tobacco-box with her fat hand, and, after puffing furiously, stopped and listened. Though near the suburbs, the street was noisy with kuruma going to and fro, as is always the case for the first few evenings after New Year's Day. The widow could hear, from a neighboring house, the voices of the young people at their games, while occasional peals of laughter poured forth into the night. She grumbled impatiently: "What is there funny about it? Tut!" Then, thinking of Takeo, she exclaimed: "It is always like this when they go to Akasaka — every one forgets his business, Take, Nami, and everybody. Young people nowadays can't be depended on." Thus muttering and trying to move a little, she touched a rheumatic spot. "Ouch!" she ejaculated, and, making a wry face, she rapped the

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tobacco-tray furiously in a fit of temper, and called out to the maid, sharply: "Matsu, Matsu, Matsu."

Just at this moment two kuruma pulled up at the gate, and a servant announced the arrival of the master.

The maid came bustling in, clad in holiday attire, and asked politely the widow's pleasure, but was only scolded for her tardiness in answering the call. Upon this she withdrew in confusion.

Immediately a ringing voice was heard.

"Good evening, mother."

Following just behind Takeo, who was still taking off his gloves, and handing her coat and that of her husband to the maid, Nami entered quietly and said, meekly:

"Good evening, mother. I'm sorry to be so late."

"Oh, so you have come back? You stayed quite long."

"Yes," answered Takeo. "We went first to Kato's, and then they wanted to go with us to Akasaka. So uncle, aunt, Chizu-ko-san, Nami, and I — just five in all — went together. They were very glad to see us at Akasaka, and, as there were other guests there, we enjoyed ourselves so much that we stayed longer than we expected." Feeling

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that his cheeks were red as a lobster and drinking a cup of tea served by the maid, he said to himself: "I'm a little tipsy, I'm afraid."

"Well," said the widow, "is everybody well at Akasaka, Nami?"

"Yes, they are all well. They wanted to be remembered to you, and told me to tell you they are sorry they have not had a chance to call. They also wished me to thank you very much for the fine present."

"Talking of the present, Nami-san, where is — ah, here it is!"

Takeo took a tray from Nami's hands and placed it before his mother. A pair of pheasants, some quail and snipes, were piled on the tray.

"Oh, game-birds? And so many —"

"Mother, the general had such good sport the last time that he only returned on the evening of the 31st. They were just going to send them to us to-day. To-morrow they expect a boar."

"A boar? Well, is it possible? Your father is only three years younger than I am, isn't he, Nami? He was a spirited man from his youth, and still seems to be so."

"I tell you, mother, he is so robust that he has passed three nights on the hills without the

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least ill result to his health. He takes pride in thinking that he can still keep up with the young people."

"I should think he would. Anybody crippled as I am by rheumatism is not much use. There is no greater foe to man than sickness. But it is about nine o'clock. You had better change your clothes and go to rest. Oh, by the way, Take, Yasuhiko was here to-day."

Takeo, who was about to rise, looked rather uneasy at this, and Nami also pricked up her ears.

"Chijiwa?"

"I think he wanted to see you."

Takeo replied, after a pause: "Did he? I also want to see him. Mother, did he come for money?"

"Why? No, by no means. Why do you think so?"

"I happened to hear something about him. Well, I will see him before long."

"And then, Yamaki was here, too."

"Oh, that foolish Yamaki?"

"He invited you to dinner on the 10th."

"H'm, such a bore!"

"You had better accept his invitation. He still remembers your father's favors."

"But —"

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"You had really better accept the invitation. Well, I'll go to bed. Good night."

"Good night," said Takeo, and Nami repeated after him: "Good night, mother."

The young couple went to their room. Nami helped her husband remove his coat and put on a quilted silk dress, over which Takeo quickly tied a white crape sash. He sat in an armchair. Nami, after brushing the coat and hanging it in the adjoining room, ordered the maid to make tea and came to her husband's side.

"You must be tired, dear."

Takeo, who was puffing blue smoke and looking over the cards, letters and New Year's congratulations received during the day, raised his head.

"*You* must be tired, Nami-san. Oh, beautiful — splendid!"

"What?"

"I say, what a beautiful-looking bride you are!"

"You make me blush."

And she blushed and turned her eyes away from the glare of the lamplight, showing her pale cheek now bright with a rosy glow and her round magé glossy as a mirror. She had on a black silk kimono with a pattern of waves and water-fowls around the skirt, with a broad belt of creamy satin and a

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jewelled pin shaped like a forget-me-not at her breast, a gift Takeo had brought her from America. As she stood in the light with a bashful smile, Takeo thought his wife very beautiful.

"I really feel as if you were a newly made bride in that dress."

"If you say such things I shall go away."

Takeo laughed. "I sha'n't say any more. But why will you go away?"

And then Nami laughed. "I shall go to change my clothes."

Takeo went out on a cruise early in the summer, and would have been back in the fall but for the fact that certain parts of the ship's machinery had to be repaired at San Francisco, where they were detained for a considerable time. It was, therefore, late in the year before he returned home. So it was not until to-day, the third day of the first month, that he was able to make his first ceremonial and private calls with Nami on the Kato and Kataoka families.

Takeo's mother was an old-fashioned lady, and was rather averse to anything foreign, but she could not be too strict to suit the taste of the young master. His spacious sitting-room was fur-

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nished in a mingled native and foreign style. A green carpet was spread on the soft floor mats, on which stood a table and chairs. In the alcove-wall was hung a landscape painting, and in front of and above it a portrait of his father Michitake. A covered bookcase and shelves stood in one corner of the room, while in the middle of the alcove was placed a sword of Kanemitsu make, much loved by his father. A naval cap and a marine glass were laid on some shelves, and a dagger hung on an alcove pillar. Among the pictures upon the wall was one representing the man-of-war he had sailed on, and another of a group of cadets, taken probably while he was at Yedajima. There were also some pictures on the table: one represented a group of three, Takeo's parents and himself when he was about five years old, leaning on his father's knee; another, Lieutenant-General Kataoka, his father-in-law, in uniform. Young and careless as the master was, everything in the room was in good order, and not a particle of dust was to be found. Moreover, in an old bronze vase on the table a few sprays of early plum-blossoms were artistically arranged. All this betrayed a heart warm and delicate and hands skilful and artistic which were constantly at work in the room. Their owner could

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be seen smiling from a heart-shaped silver frame by the vase, and seemed to be bathing in the sweet fragrance of the plum-blossoms. The lamp shed its bright light into every corner of the room, and the comfortable charcoal fire in a large fire-box rose in a purple flame against the green of the carpet.

Varied as are the things most pleasant to us, chief among them is the safe return from a long journey, when we change our travelling-suit to a comfortable kimono and sit by a fireside, listening to the mournful sound of the night wind outside, relieved by the accustomed ticking of the clock. The pleasure increases when we have with us our mother in good health and a wife young and lovely.

Takeo, who was now smoking and comfortably reclining in an easy-chair, was indeed enjoying just this sort of pleasure.

The only thing that troubled him was the thought of Chijiwa, whom his mother had mentioned a little while ago, and whose name he had just come across among the visiting-cards. Something disreputable about him had been disclosed to Takeo that very day. Some time last month, a post-card came for Chijiwa in care of the Military Headquarters while he was away. One of his fellow officers picked it up by mistake, glanced over it, and found it was

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a note from a famous usurer, the amount of his debts being written in red ink. More than that, it was certain that military secrets found their outlet at times through some unexpected channel, and benefited some speculating merchants. And still more: some one even noticed Chijiwa in the stock market, — an improper place for officers to frequent. Taking all these things into consideration, Chijiwa was decidedly under suspicion. All this was told Takeo by his father-in-law, who was an intimate friend of the chief of the Headquarters staff. Takeo should be careful of Chijiwa, and advise him to turn over a new leaf.

"Damnable fellow!"

Speaking to himself, Takeo again looked at Chijiwa's card. But he could not trouble himself long with such disagreeable thoughts. He made up his mind to see him personally, and act accordingly. His mind again turned to his present happy situation, when Nami came in with some black tea she had made after changing her dress.

"Black tea? Thank you."

He left the chair to sit by the fire.

"How about mother?"

"She has just gone to bed."

Giving him a cup of hot tea and looking at his

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red face, Nami said: "Have you a headache, my dear? You have taken more saké than was good for you. Mother urged you too much."

"Oh, no. We had such a good time, didn't we? I was so much interested in father's conversation that I scarcely knew how much I was drinking," and he laughed. "You have indeed a good father, haven't you, Nami-san?"

Nami smiled, and, glancing at him, said:

"And more than that, a good —"

"What? What did you say?"

With an astonished look, Takeo rolled his eyes purposely.

"I don't know," said she, flushing and looking down, as she played with her ring.

"Bless my heart! When did you learn to say such nice things? The breastpin was not worth it."

Rubbing her rosy cheeks with her hands which had been warmed at the fire, and heaving a little sigh, Nami reflected: "Indeed, for a long time mother must have been very lonely. When I think that you must go on duty again so soon it makes me feel that time passes all too fast."

"But if I stay always at home, you are sure to say, on every third day, 'My dear, you had better go out for a walk, hadn't you?'"

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"How dare you say that? More tea?"

Taking a sip and knocking off the ashes from his cigar into the fire-box, he looked contentedly around the room.

"After having been rocked in a hammock for more than half a year, I find this kind of room too spacious for me; everything is as luxurious as paradise. I seem to be enjoying a second honeymoon. Doesn't it seem so to you, Nami-san?"

Indeed, they had parted soon after their marriage, and now met after the lapse of half a year to live over the happiest time in their memory.

Words were now lost between them, and they only smiled and looked at each other in dreamy ecstasy. The delicate fragrance of the plum-blossoms filled the room as the happy couple sat together before the fire.

Nami raised her head as if awakened by a new thought.

"Shall you go, then, — to Yamaki's?"

"To Yamaki's? Mother wants me to, so I suppose I must go."

"I wish to go, too."

"Yes, certainly. Let's go together."

"No, I sha'n't go."

"Why not?"

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"Because I am a little afraid."

"Afraid? What do you fear?"

"I am hated, you know."

"Hated? By whom, Nami-san?"

"There is some one who hates me. Shall I tell you? It is O-Toyo-san!"

"Oh, nonsense! But she's a silly girl, isn't she? I wonder if any one will ever ask for her hand?"

"Mother says that Chijiwa is on familiar terms with Yamaki. He would do well to marry her."

"Chijiwa? Chijiwa? Damnable fellow! I knew he was a smart man, but I did not think of his ever being under suspicion. I am almost ashamed of the officers of the present day — though I am one of them. They do not retain even a shadow of the old Samurai spirit, and they are all trying to get rich. Of course I don't mean that officers should be poor. No, it is all right for them to be thrifty and to provide for their families in time of need. But what I mean is this: that one whose sole duty is to guard one's country should not indulge in money-making, especially by such disgraceful means as to loan money at a high rate of interest, to appropriate part of a poor soldier's provisions, or to arrange with supply-merchants for unlawful commissions. And then what

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annoys me most is the gambling. I know some of my fellow officers are indulging in it, and I feel very sensitive about it. Every one nowadays seems to do nothing but flatter his superiors and rob his inferiors of their money."

The ensign, as yet inexperienced in worldly ways, attacked furiously the vices of some of the officers as if he were speaking face to face with them, Nami taking in with delicious delight every word that fell from his lips. She felt proud of her brave husband, and wanted to see him raised to the position of Minister of the Navy, or, at least, to that of Head of the Ordnance Bureau, so that he might make a sweeping reform in the navy.

"I think what you say is very true. I don't know much about it, but when father was a Minister of State, many brought presents to him and made all sorts of requests. Father, of course, hated their ways, and told them that things which were to be done would be done without their special request, and things which could not be done would not be done, however much they tried to influence him. But still they sent him many presents under some pretext or other. And father would say, laughingly, that it was no wonder everybody desired to be an official."

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"Exactly. The navy and the army are just alike in that respect. Ah, money is everything." Looking at the clock, which was just striking, he said: "Why, it's ten o'clock!"

"Indeed, time flies so fast!" said Nami.

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Chapter II

Yamaki Entertains

HYOZO YAMAKI'S estate at Shiba was not very large, but it bordered a part of Sakuragawa Street and some portion of Nishinokubo hill. The garden contained a pond irregular in shape, with plenty of natural rocks to give it a wild air. Paths led here and there up the hill, while bridges were built across the narrow portions of the pond. Maples, pines, cherry-trees, and bamboo-bushes artificially dotted the landscape, while in strong contrast a massive stone lamp-post and a quaint Inari shrine stood among them. Far back from the street a summer-house was concealed and reserved for the sudden discovery of the surprised visitor. It was astonishing that such a garden should be found within the gates of a comparatively unostentatious estate, but this was Yamaki's castle in the air; not in the unrealized sense, but in the substantial sense of something built by thousands of dollars unlawfully amassed.

It was already past four in the afternoon. The evening cawing of crows was heard far and near,

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when a man in native full dress was seen leaving the noise of the house and climbing the garden hill, faintly illuminated by the setting sun.

It was Takeo. Being unable to withstand his mother's wish, he came to Yamaki's feast, but he found no pleasure in meeting and in drinking tasteless saké with guests whom he did not know. Several kinds of entertainment were provided, the last being the questionable dancing of professional girls, followed by a general orgy of the whole company. Being disgusted with such vulgarity, he had wanted to leave the place long before, and would have done so but for the repeated request of Yamaki to stay to the last, and the non-appearance of Chijiwa, whom he felt that he must see. So he slipped away for a moment, and strolled by himself, in order that his flushed face might be fanned by the cool evening breeze.

A few days after Takeo's father-in-law had told him about Chijiwa's conduct, a stranger with an alligator-leather satchel called unexpectedly, and, showing Takeo a note of which he knew nothing, asked for the payment of three thousand yen. The note was signed by Yasuhiko Chijiwa in his own handwriting, and the endorser appeared to be none other than Takeo Kawashima, under whose name

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appeared his legal seal. The stranger said that, though the note had long since expired, the borrower had not even tried to take it up, and, more than that, had suddenly moved away to some other place. He was obliged to call upon the security, being unable to see Chijiwa even at his office. The note seemed to be legally correct, and the letters shown concerning it were undoubtedly written by Chijiwa. Astonished at this unexpected affair, Takeo proceeded at once to look into the matter, but found that his mother and the steward Tazaki knew nothing of it, nor had they ever allowed Chijiwa the use of Takeo's legal seal. Considering, however, the matter in connection with the recent rumor about Chijiwa, Takeo was not slow to guess at the probable facts in the case. He was trying to see him on the very day when Chijiwa wrote to Takeo, desiring to meet him at Yamaki's on the following day.

As soon as they met, Takeo intended to ask Chijiwa about the matter, tell him briefly and to the point what he thought of him, and be gone. But Chijiwa was very late in arriving. With his anger smouldering, Takeo went up the hill-path, by the bushes of slender bamboo, and, finding the open summer-house in the shade of the ivies, he

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had rested awhile in it before he heard the light sound of wooden clogs on an adjoining path, and Toyo suddenly confronted him. With her hair dressed in a high shimada and clothed in triple robes of lilac crape, she stood there unconscious of any incongruity between the gaudy attire and her mean bearing. Making her crescent-shaped eyes still narrower, she exclaimed:

"So you are here!"

Dauntless as he was in the face of a shrieking shell from a 30-centimetre gun, he shrank from the attack of this unexpected enemy, and, trying to retire, turned about instantly on his heel. Being alarmed, she pursued him, exclaiming: "Takeo-san!"

"What is it?"

"Father wants me to show you around the garden."

"You to show me? I don't want any one to show me around the garden."

"But —"

"Leave me alone. It pleases me better."

A cold refusal such as this might well seem to discourage the boldest seducer, but she would not let him go.

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"I don't see why you want to run away from me."

Takeo was brought to a standstill.

More than ten years ago, when Takeo's father was in charge of a certain Prefecture, and Toyo's father was an official under him, Takeo used often to meet Toyo. Being then a mere boy, he delighted in teasing the little girl, and, although at times he caused her to cry, he was still fond of his playfellow. Now, after the lapse of so many years, during which things had changed, children had grown to men, and Takeo had taken to himself a young wife, Toyo cherished as ever her hopeless love for the mischievous boy, although he had become the young man who bore the title of Baron Kawashima. Rough as he was, the naval officer knew something of her mind, and was on his guard against her, even on his rare visits to Yamaki. Today, however, he was taken by surprise, and easily fell a prey to her stratagem.

"Run away? I have no need to run away. I go where I choose."

"You speak too bluntly."

Feeling ridiculous, foolish, troubled, and offended in turn, Takeo wanted to go, and tried to turn away, but to no purpose. In the secluded corner

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of the garden he was almost at the mercy of his persistent pursuer. At last a thought flashed through his mind.

"Has Chijiwa come yet? O-Toyo-san, please go and see for me."

"Chijiwa-san will not be here before evening."

"Does he come here often?"

"Yes; he was here yesterday and talked with father till late."

"Did he? Well, but he may be here now. Just go and see, please."

"No, I won't."

"But why?"

"You are sure to run away. Though you don't like me and think Nami-ko-san beautiful, it is very rude of you to send me away like that."

As Takeo wished to avoid any argument with Toyo, he had no other resource but to walk away from her. At that moment a voice was heard calling for Toyo. A maid appeared and stopped her. Availing himself of the opportunity, Takeo turned around the bamboo-bushes and walked hurriedly some distance. Breathing freely at last, and muttering a complaint, he went back to the house — within whose walls he need not fear a second attack.

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The sun had gone down; the guests had dispersed; and the noise of the day was now transferred to the kitchen. Having taken off the cumbersome parts of his dress, Yamaki, the master of the house, came almost staggering into a small room in the back of the house, with a tobacco-tray in his hand. He sat down as if crushed, his red, steaming forehead glistening in the bright light of a lamp.

"I have kept you waiting, gentlemen. I am so glad that we had a lively party." He laughed. "Well, Baron, you do not drink as if you were a sailor. Your father could quaff bottle after bottle. Though old, I am Hyozo Yamaki. It is an easy matter to swallow half a gallon or so."

Chijiwa cast his jet-black eyes on Yamaki.

"You are in high spirits, Yamaki-san. Making lots of money, I suppose?"

"No doubt about it. Why, speaking of that —" He chopped his sentences between puffs, and at last succeeded in lighting his pipe after many fruitless attempts. After puffing once, "That — you know what I mean — is now in the market. I secretly had their standing reported to me. They seem to be in a bad fix, and I think we can make a trade at a comparatively low figure. The business is very

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promising, and, now that foreigners are allowed to reside in the interior, it will be more so. What do you say to investing twenty or thirty thousand yen in the name of Tazaki-kun, Baron? I am sure it will make you richer."

The tongue of the drunkard ran on wheels. Chijiwa, looking askance at Takeo, who was sitting silent and stiff, continued:

"That — of Aomono Street, isn't it? Didn't they once have a very good business?"

"Yes, but they spoiled it by poor management. If rightly handled, it will turn out to be a regular gold mine."

"What a good chance! Sorry it is not within the power of a moneyless fellow such as I. But, Takeo-kun, you will do well to try it."

Takeo had not spoken a word till now. A dark shadow of displeasure had settled between his brows and was now knitting them closer; casting a fierce look at both of them, he began:

"I thank you for your kindness, but I don't see any use of money-making for a man in my profession, who knows not when he will be a prey to the fishes or a target for an exploding shell. I beg your pardon, but I would rather contribute thirty thousand yen, if I could spare them, to the

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Seamen's Educational Fund, than to invest them in the business you are talking of."

Chijiwa quickly surveyed Takeo's face upon his downright refusal, and winked at Yamaki.

"Yamaki-san," he said, "I may be selfish, but I want you to put off this matter till after my affair is settled. Baron Kawashima has been kind enough to comply with my request, and so I want you to do as I desired. You have your seal with you?"

He took out something like a promissory note and placed it before Yamaki.

No wonder that Chijiwa was under a cloud. Taking advantage of his position during the last year, he not only had been Yamaki's adviser and spy and shared in his profit, but had boldly made use of government funds and tried his luck on the stock exchange, which attempt had ended in a loss of over five thousand yen. Forcing Yamaki and shelling out all he himself had, Chijiwa managed to get together about two thousand yen, but still there was a deficit of three thousand to be made up. His only relative, Kawashima, was rich, and the widow was very fond of him. Chijiwa knew the nature of his tight-fisted aunt too well to ask frankly a loan, and yet, needing the funds for the time being, he committed a crime by forging Takeo's

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seal, and borrowed the sum at a high rate of interest. The note soon expired, and he was annoyed to find the money-lender was so urgent as to send an open notice even to his government office. There being no help, he tried to induce Takeo, who had just come home, to loan him three thousand yen to cover the other three thousand. Thus he was trying to redeem Takeo's name with Takeo's money! He had called on Takeo the other day, but had not been able to see him. Then an official trip took him away from town for a few days, and kept him totally ignorant of the fact that the usurer had already been to Kawashima's.

Yamaki nodded; ringing a bell for a red ink-pad and running his eyes over the note, he took out his seal and stamped it under his name as security.

Chijiwa took it up and placed it before Takeo, as he said: "Now the note is ready. When can I get the money?"

"I have it with me."

"With you? You are joking."

"Yes, I have. Here — three thousand yen. All right, isn't it?"

He took from his pocket something wrapped in paper and tossed it to Chijiwa.

Chijiwa, who had picked it up wonderingly and

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opened it, turned suddenly red in the face, and the next moment turned black with rage and ground his teeth furiously. What he saw before his eyes was the note which he believed was still in the hands of the usurer — the note which Takeo, on his part, after due inquiry into the matter, had paid silently for the shameless debtor.

"Why, this —"

"You pretend not to recognize it? Confess your guilt like a man!"

Thoroughly circumvented by Takeo, at whom he had been laughing till this very moment as a mere boy, Chijiwa bit his lip with a vengeance, his whole soul being aflame with rage.

Yamaki sat as if petrified, holding his long pipe by the wrong end and looking mechanically at the faces of his companions.

"Chijiwa," said Takeo, "I won't say any more about this. We are cousins, and I will never sue for the forgery of my seal. I paid the man three thousand yen, and so his dunning notices will not reach your office again. You may be at ease upon that point."

Stared out of countenance, Chijiwa tried hard to appear calm. He would gladly have pounced upon Takeo but for his quickness to see, even in

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his fury, that it was too late to justify himself. So he changed his attitude at once.

"Well, my dear cousin, I feel ashamed of myself to be thus spoken to. But I was forced to — "

"Forced to? Forced to borrow money by violating the civil and moral law?"

"Just a moment, please. It was like this. I was hard pressed for money and had nowhere to go for it. Had you been at home, I should of course have spoken to you about it, but how could I ask aunt for such a thing? Then it was so urgent that, counting on something I had expected last month, I — I knew it was very, very wrong, but I intended to confess frankly when all was settled — "

"Nonsense. How could one who intended to confess frankly dare to borrow another three thousand yen without a word?"

Yamaki, alarmed at the fierceness of Takeo, who seemed tempted to attack Chijiwa, said: "Hold on, Baron. Don't get excited. I know nothing about the matter, but I think you will do well to be lenient, Baron, as he is your cousin. Two or three thousand yen is not a very large sum. Chijiwa-kun is wrong. There is no doubt about that. But, if this be made public, Chijiwa-kun can no longer hold his position. And so I pray, Baron — "

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"I told you that for that reason I had paid the debt, and was not going to sue for it. Yamaki, you had better be silent; this does not concern you at all." Turning to Chijiwa, he said: "No, that I won't do, but I'll break off friendship with you from this very moment."

The thing having gone to this length, Chijiwa saw that he need no longer be afraid, and began, in a bold and sarcastic way:

"Break off friendship? I am not particularly sorry for that, but — "

Takeo's eyes shot fire.

"You don't care for that if only you have money? You coward!"

"What?"

Yamaki, who had become somewhat sobered at the situation, could not refrain from putting in a word.

"Baron — Chijiwa-san — well, — be — be still a moment. You can't settle it in that way. Say, now — wait." Turning this way and that way: "I say, wait."

They were forced to calm down. After a while Takeo broke the silence, fixing his eyes on Chijiwa: "Chijiwa, I won't say anything more about this. We were brought up from childhood like brothers,

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and I really thought you my superior in talent as well as in age. I thought that we might be a mutual help, and I meant to do my best for you as long as I could. Until lately my trust in you has defied all ill-report about you. But really I was deceived by you. To deceive me is a personal affair, but, more than that, you — no, I will not say it. I do not care to hear how you spent the three thousand yen. But let me say one word. You may not know how quick people's eyes and ears are. But I tell you that you're now under suspicion. I advise you to take care not to smirch the honor of a soldier. You care for nothing more precious than gold, so it is useless to talk, but — study what shame is. I shall refuse to see you in the future. I formally make you a present of the three thousand yen."

Thus, speaking gravely, Takeo took up the note before him and tore it to pieces. Rising suddenly, he stepped out into the adjoining room and ran against and knocked down Yamaki's daughter, Toyo, who appeared to have been listening. Leaving her crying for help, he went out boldly towards the porch.

The dumfounded Yamaki looked at Chijiwa, whose eyes had just been raised to meet his:

"How boyish he is still! But, Chijiwa-san,

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three thousand yen for breaking off friendship — it isn't so bad, is it?"

Chijiwa looked down at the scattered pieces of the note and remained motionless, biting his lips.

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Chapter III

Confidences

EARLY in February, Nami caught a cold. She soon recovered, but one evening she had to sit up till late in order to finish a garment for her mother-in-law, and she was taken sick again. And on this, the fifteenth of the month, she was still confined to her bed.

People love to remark that each winter exceeds in cold any that went before, but, in this particular year, they were certainly right, for the raw north wind that daily raged often brought snow or rain, and pierced one to the marrow even on fine days. The strong fell sick, the ill died, and many were the death-notices in the papers. The cold helped to prolong the indisposition of Nami, who was not in any way strong, and, though she showed no special symptom, she spent day after day languidly, with a heavy head and little appetite.

The clock had just struck two. After its vibrations had died away, everything seemed to be silent for a while, and the slow tick-tock of the clock added to the stillness of the moment. It was a remarkably

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fine day for the season, and, though the light azure of the early spring sky was shut out by four paper screens, the mild light of the sun rested brightly on them and a few filtered invisible rays even seemed to dance about the nimble fingers of Nami, who was lying down and knitting a black sock, and on her glossy locks as they flowed wildly over a snow-white pillow. On a screen to the left, the slender shadows of a sumac were seen drooping over a bronze basin; on the right was clearly outlined an old broad-stemmed plum-tree, whose bare boughs kept interweaving in and out, the budding shadow with flowers few and far between bespeaking a spring still in its infancy. Above the low wainscot of one screen the little head of a kitten basking in the sunshine was shadowed forth. Suddenly she jumped at a moth over her head, which had been allured perhaps by the warm sun, and, missing it, fell flat on the floor. But she did not seem to care a whit, and presumably was taking her time in licking her paws, as the shadow of her head was seen nodding and nodding. Nami watched the whole movement as pictured on the paper, and smiled, but, being dazed, she shut her eyes and remained in a dreamy dulness. Then, changing from one side

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to the other, she stroked the half-knit sock and began to move her needles in and out.

The noise of heavy footsteps was heard on the veranda, and the dwarfed shadow of a portly human figure moved along the screens. Presently it stopped and disclosed itself to be the widow Kawashima, who entered and sat by the bed.

"How do you feel to-day?"

"Much better, thank you, mother. I could get up, but—"

Nami put her work aside, and, adjusting her clothes a little, tried to sit up. The widow stopped her.

"Oh, no, that won't do. I am no stranger, you know. Don't trouble yourself over my coming. Why, look there, you are knitting again. That won't do, either. A patient has nothing to do but to look after herself, you see. Now, Nami, you must forget everything on Takeo's account. Take care and get well soon, my dear—"

"Excuse me, I have been confined to my bed so long—"

"You are not talking to your mother, are you? I don't like that; you are altogether too distant."

The widow did not say everything that was in her mind. She used to complain that daughters-

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in-law in these days were not polite enough to a person of her position, and thought it was at least one redeeming point in Nami's favor that she was remarkably free from such a defect. But to-day she was thinking of something else, and, as if she were suddenly reminded of it, she asked:

"Oh, you got a letter from Takeo, did you not? What did he say?"

Nami took out a letter from under her pillow and showed her a part of it, saying:

"He is coming back next Saturday, he says."

"Is he?"

The widow ran her eyes over the paper and gave it back.

"H'm, what nonsense he talks about taking you away for your health. If you move about in this cold weather you will be sick even if you are strong. A cold will be easily cured if you stay in bed patiently. Takeo is young, you know, and so he is always over-anxious and talks about doctors and going somewhere for the health. When I was young I hardly ever went to bed for a little sickness, and even when my child was born I did not stay in bed more than ten days. Write to Takeo, and tell him not to be anxious about you, as I am here."

The widow laughed, but her eyes showed her

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displeasure. As she went out, Nami sat up, saying: "Excuse me for not rising."

Then Nami drew a troubled breath.

She hardly believed that a mother could be jealous of her son's wife, but, after the return of her husband, she perceived that a strange feeling had developed between her and her mother-in-law. When Takeo returned from his cruise he found Nami in very poor health; he sympathized with her deeply for her anxiety for him during his absence, and his love for her was more apparent than ever. Although Nami was very happy to be the object of his thoughtful care, she was troubled to find that her mother-in-law was jealous about it. How hard it was, she thought, to love and be loved by her husband, and yet to serve and please such a mother-in-law as the widow was.

"Madam, Miss Kato is here to see you."

At the voice of the maid Nami opened her eyes. On looking at the guest her face brightened joyfully.

"Well, O-Chizu-san! It is so good of you to come to see me."

"Do you feel better to-day?"

Putting aside her silk pouch and her head-gear of

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lilac crape, a girl of about seventeen in shimada approached Nami's bed. Her slender figure was clothed in a black overcoat, and her sparkling black eyes shone brightly under her well-formed eyebrows. She was Chizu Kato, eldest daughter of the Baroness Kato, Nami's aunt.

Nami and Chizu were cousins. They had been great friends from the time they were in the kindergarten, and poor Koma, the younger sister of Nami, often complained that she was left without any playmate. And so, after the marriage of Nami, while other schoolmates were estranged gradually, Chizu, on the contrary, was delighted at the nearness of their houses, and came to see her quite often. During Takeo's long absence the greatest consolation of the sad and lonely Nami, excepting the letters of Takeo burning with love, were the friendly visits of her dear Chizu.

Nami said, smilingly: "I feel much better today, but my head is still heavy and my cough very troublesome."

"Oh, that is bad. But how cold it is!"

Glancing at the maid, who courteously offered her a cushion, she took a seat near Nami. Then, warming her hands with their jewelled rings over

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the fire, she repeatedly covered her rosy cheeks with them.

"Aunt and uncle are both well?"

"All well, thank you. They are very anxious about you, as it is so cold. We were saying last night that when you get a little better you had better go to Zushi for a change. It will certainly do you good."

"Were you? Takeo wrote me from Yokosura, saying that I needed a change."

"Oh, did he? Then you had better go as soon as possible."

"But I shall get well very soon, anyway."

"You will have to be very careful of your cold."

The maid came in and brought tea for Chizu.

"Kane, where is mother? A guest? Well, who? A man from the country? O-Chizu-san, you have plenty of time to-day, I suppose? Kane, bring in some nice things for O-Chizu-san."

"Why, I come often, you know. You can't afford to entertain me always. Wait a moment." Taking out a little box: "Your mother is fond of rice dumpling, isn't she? I have brought her some. But if she has a caller, take it in afterward."

"Thank you; she will be so pleased."

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Chizu then took out some red oranges. "Look here, aren't these nice? These are my present to you. But I fear they aren't very sweet."

"Oh, how nice! Do peel one for me, please."

Nami tasted with a relish the one that Chizu gave her, and tried to brush back the loose hair playing about her forehead.

"You feel uncomfortable, don't you? Isn't it better to dress it loosely? Now, let me help you. No, no need of sitting up; that is all right."

Chizu brought in the necessary things from a toilet-stand in the adjoining room, and began to comb Nami's hair gently.

"I haven't told you about the alumni meeting we had yesterday. You received a notice, didn't you? We had a very nice time. Everybody wanted to be remembered to you." With a light laugh, she continued: "It is only a year since we left our school, but already one-third of us are married. It was such fun to see Okubo-san, Honda-san, and Kitakoji-san; they all dressed their hair in marumagé, and they looked peculiarly grave. Do I hurt you? And, dear me, they all talked about themselves. And then we had a debate on the advisability of parents and married sons living apart. Kitakoji-san took the negative, saying that her inex-

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perience as a housekeeper had constantly been supplemented by the help of her gentle mother-in-law, while Okubo-san championed the affirmative side, her mother-in-law, you know, being very strict.

"Oh, it was so funny! And then I tried to perplex them, when they told me that I had no business in such discussion, as I was still an outsider! Isn't this a little too tight?"

"No, not at all. You must have enjoyed it very much. Every one spoke from her own experience, I imagine. Things are different in each house, so you cannot include all in a general proposition, I suppose. O-Chizu-san, you remember what aunt said once; that young people alone are apt to become indolent and selfish. I think she was right in saying so. We should not neglect the older people; don't you agree with me?"

Nami was a thoughtful girl who had a taste of her own in managing household affairs. She listened to her father's teachings with intelligence, and watched the ways of her stepmother with critical eyes. And she looked forward to the time when one day she should be mistress of her own house and put her ideas into practice. But here with the Kawashima family she found what she had scarcely dreamed of. The whole administrative

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power lay in the hands of an empress dowager, and she herself stood in the position of a nominal princess imperial. To conform to the new situation for a while and wait for a better day — this was what she did. But when she found herself standing between her husband and his mother, and unable to help him as she desired, she silently wept over her hard fortune, and often doubted if her stepmother's favorite theory on separate living, which Nami once thought not congenial to her country's custom, was not after all the better one. Nami, however, was too spirited to give up rashly her long-cherished ideas.

Tying Nami's coiffure with white ribbon, Chizu, unable to read the inner thoughts of her cousin, who had spent ten years under a stepmother and almost one year by the side of a mother-in-law, looked into her face and said, with a low voice: "Does she still get out of temper often?"

"Sometimes, but she treats me kindly since I have been sick. But — she does not like me to think so much of Takeo, that is the trouble. And then Takeo on his part always tells me that here mother is the queen, and I must try to please her more than him! Yes, — but let's stop talking about such things. I feel more comfortable, thank you.

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My head is much better now." And, feeling of her head-dress, Nami closed her eyes wearily.

Putting away the comb and wiping her hands with a piece of soft paper, Chizu stood a while before the toilet-stand, where she finally noticed a little box. As she opened it and took out something, she said: "I am never tired of looking at this pin. It is so beautiful. Takeo-san has good taste, hasn't he?" Coming back to her seat: "Shunji, you know, always urges me to study French or German. He thinks that the wife of a diplomat ought to know one of them. But it's too hard for me." Shunji was the name of Chizu's future husband, now an official in the Foreign Department.

"How I shall love to see you in marumagé — though the shimada becomes you so well," laughed Nami.

"Oh, mercy!"

Her beautiful eyebrows were drawn together, but a smile which blossomed out of her dainty lips betrayed her.

"You know, O-Nami-san, Hagiwara-san, who graduated the year before us?"

"Yes, she who was married to Matsudaira?"

"Yes; she was divorced yesterday, I hear."

"Divorced? What was the trouble?"

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"She was much liked by her husband's parents, but Matsudaira appeared to take a dislike to her."

"Has she not a child?"

"Yes, one. But Matsudaira turned from her to a bad woman, and was so shameless in his infidelity that Hagiwara-san's father got very angry, and said that he would not have his daughter married to such a man. And he at last called her back."

"What a pity! Why did he dislike her? Wasn't it very cruel in him?"

"Indeed, it makes me angry to think of it. I wish it had been the other way. How wretched one must be not to be loved by one's husband, although liked by his parents."

Nami sighed.

"It makes me feel sad and lonely to think how those who attended the same school and studied in the same class-room are scattered far and wide, each following her own destiny. O-Chizu-san, we two must be friends forever and stand by each other!"

"That is my prayer."

Their hands were clasped unconsciously. After a while Nami smiled, and said: "I dream of lots of things as I lie here idle. Don't laugh at me

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if I tell you one of my dreams. Suppose many years hence we should have war with some foreign power, and Japan wins. Then Shunji-san as Minister of State for Foreign Affairs will go abroad to negotiate a peace treaty, and Takeo as Commander-in-Chief of our fleet will station scores of vessels at the enemy's ports — "

" And then uncle of Akasaka will be Commander-in-Chief of the Army, and my father in the Upper House will have a bill passed appropriating hundreds of millions of yen for the army and navy expenditures."

" And then O-Chizu-san and I will join the ranks of the Red Cross."

" But you can't do that if you are not strong," laughed Chizu.

No sooner had Nami laughed than she coughed and put her hand to her right breast.

" We have talked too much. Are you in pain there? "

" When I cough it hurts me here."

As she spoke Nami turned her eyes to the fading light.

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Chapter IV

Zushi Days

ONLY five days following his return home in disgrace with Takeo, and harboring a grudge in his breast, Chijiwa was transferred suddenly from his office at the Headquarters to a regiment in the First Division.

There is a time at least once in life when everything we do goes wrong, and we are constantly hurried from bad to worse, as if Heaven would never stop chastising us. During the past year Chijiwa had been in this strait, and as yet he was unable to see his way out. Nami had been snatched away by Takeo; his speculations had failed; the borrowing of money brought him disgrace; Takeo, whom he had slighted as a mere boy, had humiliated him; and the intercourse with the Kawashima family, his only relatives, had come to an end. And, more than this, without a word of warning he was stripped of his position at Headquarters, which, as a short cut to his speedy promotion, he would have defended at all hazards, and was consigned to a petty office in a division which he had

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despised hitherto as a mere drudgery. Chijiwa, however, was conscious of his guilt, and did not dare to protest. Disdaining nothing in his misfortune, he served in his new office unblushingly. Hitherto he had been a self-possessed man who never lost his presence of mind, but this last incident dealt him such a blow that, whenever his thoughts turned to his disgrace, he could not prevent his blood from boiling up like a seething pit.

The present condition of Chijiwa's life was like that of a man who, putting his feet on the ladder of promotion which leads inevitably to the crown of success, had been knocked off suddenly when he had already ascended one or two rounds. But who had knocked him off? From a slight hint in Takeo's words, and from the fact that the Chief of the Headquarters staff was an intimate friend of Lieutenant-General Kataoka, Chijiwa suspected that the latter had at least some share in the matter. Again, he knew Takeo to be a man quite indifferent to money. So his extraordinary anger about three thousand yen — though it included the seal forgery — argued something deeper than a matter of mere money. Might not Nami have slandered him to Takeo about his old love-making? The deeper he reflected the more his

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suspicion became fact, and this in time added fuel to his wrath. His resentment toward his lost love, his chagrin at the loss of a promising position, and all sorts of feelings of despair, jealousy, and hatred eddied around the general, Nami, and Takeo, and rose up like tongues of flame. He had been proud of his cool-headedness and had laughed at the folly of forgetting calculation in the heat of excitement. But now, after these repeated overthrows, he lost his temper so far that if he could not find vent for the swelling volume of his venomous feelings he felt as if he could no longer contain himself.

Revenge, revenge! There is no joy in this world comparable to that of sipping the blood of those whom we have detested, and of smacking the lips over its deliciousness. Revenge, revenge! But how? How could he lay a mine to blow up the two odious houses of Kataoka and Kawashima, and, springing it from a safe distance, glory in the delightful scene in which the flesh of the hated men and women would be rent and their bones crushed as they all were sent half-alive to hell? This was the problem that had crossed and recrossed Chijiwa's mind, day and night, since last January.

It was the middle of March, when the plum-blossoms were falling like flakes of snow. One

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day Chijiwa went to the Shinbashi Station to meet a friend who had been transferred to Tokyo from the Third Division. As he was going out of the waiting-room he chanced to meet a tall lady with a young girl just outside of the ladies' room.

"How do you do?"

Madam Kataoka and Koma stood in front of him. For a moment Chijiwa changed color, but he instantly recovered himself, reading from their faces that they knew nothing of his conduct. He bore malice, it was true, for the general and Nami, but he saw at once there was no use in being an enemy to Madam Kataoka. So he made a courteous bow, and smilingly said, "How do you do?"

"You are quite a stranger."

"I should have called on you, but I have been kept very busy these days. Where are you going now?"

"To Zushi. And you?"

"Just to meet a friend here. Are you going for a vacation?"

"Oh, haven't you heard the news? We have a patient."

"A patient? Who is it?" Chijiwa wondered.

"Nami," answered the viscountess.

The bell rang at this moment, and the passen-

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gers went along like a tide to the gates. Koma urged her mother to hurry, saying, "Mother, it is time."

Chijiwa took a bag from the hand of the viscountess and walked by her side.

"Is she very ill?"

"Yes, it is lung trouble."

"Lung trouble? Consumption?"

"Well, she had a severe hemorrhage, and so went to Zushi the other day for the season. I am going to see her now." Taking the bag from Chijiwa at the gate, she thanked him, adding: "Good-by; I will be back soon. Come and see me sometime."

As he watched the beautiful cashmere shawl and the red-ribboned coiffure vanish into a first-class compartment, Chijiwa turned about with a revengeful smile on his lips.

Seeing that Nami's symptoms became more and more marked, the doctor did all he could without exciting alarm. But for all that her condition grew steadily worse, and by the beginning of March it became apparent that she was a victim of consumption.

Even her mother-in-law, who, taking pride in

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her own health, had derided the weakness of young people and turned a deaf ear to any such plan of treating sickness by a change of climate, was alarmed at Nami's hemorrhages. She also was afraid of the consequences, — she had heard of the infectious nature of this dreadful disease, — and had followed the advice of the doctor in sending Nami with a suitable nurse to Kataoka's villa at Zushi.

Nami had shrunk from the first attacks of the disease, feeling as if she were a lonely traveller in a vast stretch of wilderness enshrouded in a coal-black sheet of threatening clouds. But now that the awful silence was already broken, and Nami stood in the midst of deafening thunder and ghastly lightning, black wind and smoking rain, she determined to pass on quickly through the thick folds of storm at any cost. And yet how horrible to think of the first attack.

It was the second day of March. Nami was feeling unusually well and was trying to amuse herself by arranging flowers — something she had not indulged in for a long time. Asking her husband, who happened to be at home, to help her get the material, she was sitting on the veranda and selecting boughs from a beautiful budding red plum-tree. All at once she felt a pain in her breast, her

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head swam, and, uttering an involuntary cry, was immediately overcome by a hemorrhage. It had come at last — that moment which she had foreseen with a sense of horror, and she now felt that she had caught a glimpse of her grave in the vague distance.

Ah, death! When Nami had been a hapless child life had little joy for her, and death little sorrow. But now that she had tasted the sweets of life, which was everything to her, to think of its termination was simply terrible. And as she meditated upon her doom, she felt that she must fight against it by all means. Bracing her spirits, too easily depressed, she assiduously took care of herself, to the surprise of the attending doctor.

Takeo, who at that time was at the naval station of Yokosura, within a short distance of Zushi, came to see her often, snatching for this purpose every spare hour. Letters came from her father, and the visits of her aunt and Chizu were as frequent as possible. And then her old nurse Iku, who had been separated from her since the last summer, when she was sent away from the Kawashima household, watched over her with a tenderness that pleased Nami to such an extent that she even felt a delight in the sadness of being ill, since it afforded

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the opportunity for their happy meeting. And, besides, there was an old faithful servant who attended to every comfort about the house. Nami, who had left the city when it was cold, and placed herself in the mild bosom of the sunny shore, breathed in the warm light of kindly nature and the still warmer atmosphere of human sympathy. She felt relieved, and, after two weeks, the hemorrhage stopped and the cough lessened. The doctor, who visited her twice a week from Tokyo, was pleased to find no progress in the disease, even if she was not improving, and he assured her that there was a hope of recovery if she would not worry and would remain patiently under medical treatment.

It was the first Saturday in April, and, although still early for cherry flowers in the capital, here at Zushi the wild cherry-trees on the hills had already begun to bloom, and patches of white were seen on the green slopes. But to-day nature seemed to be in a gloomy mood, and from early morning the rain drizzled and the hills and sea were blotted out in one misty gray. The long spring day appeared to draw itself out endlessly. Toward evening, however, the rain steadily increased and the

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wind began to rise. The wind shrieked and howled through the doors and screens, and the rolling roar of the angry sea sounded like the gallop of millions of wild horses. The whole village of fishermen bolted their doors, and not a light was seen to betray their existence.

At the villa of Kataoka, however, a scene totally different was presented. There Takeo was welcomed. He had been expected early in the day, but, being unavoidably detained, he had hastened to come through the deep dark of the stormy night. He had already changed his dress and had eaten supper, and was now leaning on a table reading a letter. Opposite to him sat Nami, sewing a pretty bag, and often stopping her needle to glance and smile at her husband or to listen to the noise outside as she mused silently. A tuft of cherry flowers and leaves was pinned in her hair. On the table between the two was placed a lamp which burned cheerfully and reflected a pink light from its shade. In the vase near by a cherry spray was thrust, with its snowy flowers silently drooping. Perhaps they were dreaming of the spring they had left that morning on the hill.

The noise of the wind and rain was heard rushing and splashing around the house.

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Takeo folded the letter. "Father seems to be very anxious about you," said he. "I have to go to Tokyo to-morrow, so I will try to go to Akasaka, too."

"You are going to-morrow? In this weather? But mother will be waiting for you. I wish to go with you."

"Nami-san! Don't forget what you are here for. Remember for awhile that you are in exile."

"If this be exile, I wish that I might spend my whole life here. My dear, you may smoke."

"Do I look as if I wanted to smoke? Well, I had better not while I am here. But on the day before I come and the day after I will smoke twice as much as usual."

Nami laughed, and said: "Well, as you are so good I will give you some nice cakes. Iku will bring them."

"Thank you. Did O-Chizu-san bring them? What is that? A pretty thing, isn't it?"

"I am just killing time by making this for mother. Oh, no, this won't hurt me. I am taking my time, you know. I feel so well this evening. Won't you let me sit up a little longer? I don't look sick now, do I?"

"You ought to feel well, for Doctor Kawashima

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is here," he laughingly replied. "But you really look better these days. No more fear about you."

Old Iku, who came in at that moment with cakes and tea, remarked:

"What a terrible storm this is! We could hardly sleep to-night if my master were not with us. Miss Chizu has gone back, and the nurse also has left for Tokyo. How lonely we should feel without them, even though old Mohei is here."

"How a sailor at sea must feel in this kind of weather! But I should think that the one who is thinking of him at home is more to be pitied."

"Oh," said Takeo, drinking a cup of tea and eating two or three pieces of cake in rapid succession, "oh, this is mild weather. But if you were to be in a big storm for two or three days in the South China Sea, you would know what a terrible one really is. A large vessel of over four thousand tons will pitch thirty to forty degrees, the decks being washed by the mountainous waves, and the hull creaking like a wooden house. You wouldn't feel very well, I'll wager you."

The wind grew more violent, and a blast dashed the rain against the house, sounding like a shower of pebbles. Nami shut her eyes and Iku shrugged her shoulders. They stopped talking, and for a while

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only the voice of the storm was heard raging furiously.

"Let us stop talking about dismal things. You can do no better in this kind of weather than to make the lamp burn bright and talk cheerfully. This place seems to be warmer than Yokosura. Wild cherry-trees are already in bloom like these."

Putting the flowers in the vase, Nami said: "Old Mohei brought this from the hill this morning. Isn't it beautiful? This weather, I am afraid, will do much harm to the trees on the hill. But how brave this looks! Oh, yes, I read this afternoon in the poems of Rengetsu this pretty one:

"'How I love thee, O flower fair,
E'er blooming in thy first delight,
And in the morning sun so bright
E'er falling bravely, pure as air.'"

"What? E'er falling bravely? I tell you, our people admire flowers and everything else too much as they fall. That is very gallant, but it is not good to be too gallant. In war or in anything, those who die quickly are losing ground. I want to encourage the headstrong, obstinate, and enduring side of our people's character. And so my song

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will be like this. Listen. It will sound queer, as it is my first trial, you know:

"Don't laugh and say 'tis obstinate
To stick so long, loathing to part
With life, but how it cheers my heart
To see the flowers bloom sedate
And bloom and bloom till Spring is late."

"How is this? Don't I beat Rengetsu?"

"Why, my master is a regular poet," remarked Iku. "Don't you think so, madam?"

Takeo was merry. "With old Iku's sanction, I could at once establish my fame."

The noise of the increasing storm, reënforced by that of the waves, filled a gap made in their talk, and they felt as if they were out in a boat on the angry sea. Old Iku went out to get some water in a kettle. Nami took out the thermometer she had just been using, and, reading it by the light, told her husband proudly that her temperature was even lower than usual. She then looked for a while at the flowers on the table, and, suddenly dimpling, said:

"It's just a year now. I remember the day well. I was just starting in a carriage and my folks came out to see me off, but I could not find

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words to say farewell. Then, as I crossed Tameike Bridge, the evening overtook us and the full moon rose. Cherry flowers were in full bloom on the hill beyond, and, when I drove past, the petals came falling off like flakes of snow and danced into my carriage window. One settled on a lock of my hair, and I did not know it until my aunt picked it off when I was about to get out."

Takeo, resting his cheek on his hand, said: "Oh, a year or so passes very quickly. It will not be long before we shall celebrate our silver wedding. It amuses me to think how composed you looked at our wedding. I always wondered how you could appear so cool."

"I know you did, but I will tell you confidently that I was really scared and could hardly hold the ceremonial cup."

Iku came in with the kettle, smiling. "You are having a good time. I never felt so light-hearted at seeing you merry. This reminds me of our stay at Ikao last year."

"Ikao! How I enjoyed it!" said Nami.

"How about the fern-gathering?" asked Takeo. "I remember a lady who took her own time."

"But you hurried me so much," she expostulated.

"It will soon be the season for ferns. You must

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get well, my dear, and we will have another fern-gathering."

"Oh, yes, I must get well by that time."

The next day was miraculously fine after the storm of the night.

Takeo was to go to Tokyo in the afternoon. And wishing to take a walk that warm, windless morning, he went out with Nami from the back of the villa to the beach, passing over a sandy hill covered with pine-trees.

"What fine weather! We never thought last night that we should have such a fine day," said Nami.

"No, indeed," replied Takeo. "See how near the opposite shore seems to be. It looks as if it were within call."

Stepping on the sandy beach, already dry, and leaving behind them some children hunting for shells and fishermen getting a seine ready, the two walked along the crescent beach toward a lonely spot.

As if suddenly reminded of something, Nami asked: "Do you know, my dear, what Chijiwa-san is doing?"

"Chijiwa? That shameless fellow! I haven't seen him since. But why do you ask about him?"

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Nami, hesitating: "Why, you will laugh at me, but I dreamed about him last night."

"You dreamed about him?"

"Yes, he was talking with mother."

"You worry yourself about such things," he said, with a laugh. "But what was he talking about?"

"I could not tell, but mother nodded many times. O-Chizu-san told me the other day that she had seen him and Yamaki walking together, so I think that made me dream of him. My dear, Chijiwa-san won't come to our house, will he?"

"He won't, I am sure. Mother is also angry with him, you know."

A sigh escaped Nami's lips.

"I am always thinking how mother is vexed with me on account of my illness."

Takeo felt a spasm go through him. He did not tell his sick wife that since she had been away his mother had become more and more ill-disposed towards her, that she had advised him to keep away as much as possible from Zushi for fear of infection, or that she had grumbled about the trouble occasioned by Nami's illness, and had even spoken ill of the Kataoka family. If Takeo tried to appease her, she would call him a fool, saying that he was

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disobeying his parent for his wife's sake. And this happened more than once or twice.

"Oh, you are over anxious. Why should you worry? Use all your strength to get well and be ready for next spring. We will then go with mother to Yoshino to enjoy the wild cherry flowers. Well, we have come quite a ways. Do you feel tired? Shall we turn back?"

The couple now stood where the sandy coast rose into a rocky hill.

"Let's go to Fudo. I am not at all tired. I feel as if I could walk as far as America."

"Are you sure you are all right? Perhaps you had better put on this shawl. The rocks are slippery, so hold my arm fast."

Takeo helped Nami to follow a narrow path over the rocks, and, stopping many times on the way, they went to where some threads of water were falling from above. By the side of the waterfall was a shrine of Fudo. A few pine-trees, lengthening out their stems from the slope, looked down over the sea slantingly.

Takeo brushed the dust from a rock and spread the shawl to let Nami sit upon it. He took his seat by her, and, clasping his knees, exclaimed: "How calm this is!"

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The sea was indeed very calm. The midday sky was cloudless and blue to the very core of heaven, and a vast expanse of the azure sea gleamed here and there like a silken white sheet, and as far as eye could reach not a single ripple disturbed its perfect smoothness. The land and sea now rested dreamily in a peaceful spring day.

"My dearest!" said she.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Can this be cured?"

"What?"

"My disease."

"What are you talking about? Why should it not be cured? Depend on me, you will be cured. I will cure you!"

Nami, leaning on her husband's shoulder: "But I often think that I may never get well. My mother died of this disease, and —"

"Nami-san, why do you talk like that to-day? You are certain to get well. You heard the doctor say so, didn't you? Well, your mother might be — by that disease, but you are under twenty, and the disease is still in its early stage, so you may be sure you will be cured. You know of Okahara, one of our relatives? He lost his right lung, and the doctors gave up all hopes of him, but he lived

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fifteen years after that. You will be cured if your will is strong enough. If not, it will be due to my lack of love for you. But I do love you, and so you will get well. But why are you in this mood?"

Takeo took Nami's right hand and pressed it passionately to his lips. On her finger there sparkled a diamond ring given to her by Takeo.

The two remained silent for awhile. A white sail appeared coming from the direction of Yenoshima, and glided along on the smooth sea. And the merry songs of the far away fishermen were wafted to them through the still air.

Nami, with a smile in her swimming eyes, said: "I shall be cured. Yes, surely. But why must we die? How I should like to live a thousand and twenty years! But, if we must die, let us die together!"

"When you are gone, you may be sure I shall not live."

"Really? What a joy to die together! But you have a mother and duty to attend, and cannot do as you wish. I shall have to go first and wait. Will you think of me often when I am gone? You will, dearest, won't you?"

Shedding tears and patting Nami on the head, Takeo said: "Let's talk no more of such sad

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things. Get well, Nami-san, and we shall live to celebrate our golden wedding."

Clasping Takeo's hands tightly in hers and dropping her head upon his knees, she wept. "I am your wife even in death. Nothing shall ever part us — neither foes, disease, nor death. I am your own till the very end of time!"

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Chapter V

Revenge

THE smile that rose to Chijiwa's lips when he heard at Shinbashi Station of Nami's illness signalized his first feeling of triumph in finding an unexpected clue to the solution of the hard problem which had hitherto remained unsolvable. The hated families of Kawashima and Kataoka were concentrated in the person of Nami. Her disease was therefore a rare opportunity for revenge. Its infectious and fatal nature and the habitual absence of Takeo also favored his scheming. And it seemed that a word or two dropped between the widow and her daughter-in-law was all that was necessary. If his mine exploded at once, he would but jump aside and view from a safe place the whole tragedy in which they would be writhing in one bloody struggle. Chijiwa's mind dwelt upon his revenge and cheered his depressed soul.

He knew well his aunt's nature. He knew that she was not so much offended with him as Takeo was. He knew that she always looked down upon Takeo as a mere boy, and trusted more to his own

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advice as a man of the world. He knew also that as her relations were few and the young couple were not at one with her, she was feeling lonesome in spite of her extreme audacity, and that she wanted some one to side with her. He, therefore, had no difficulty in seeing that his scheme was sure of success before he took a single step to advance it.

First of all, Chijiwa sent Yamaki occasionally to the house of Kawashima to spy out its condition, and also to set afloat false news about his own penitent conduct. One night toward the end of April, hearing that Nami was still far from well after two months' treatment, and that his aunt was more and more ill-disposed toward her, he took advantage of Takeo's absence, and also of a business trip of Steward Tazaki's, and found his way to the house of Kawashima, which for a long time had been unvisited by him. He happened to find his aunt alone, deeply engrossed in thought, with a letter from Takeo in her hand.

"No, there has been little result, though her treatment costs a great deal of money," said the widow. "It's more than two months, yet she is far from recovery. I don't know really what to do. I should be greatly relieved if I had some

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one to advise me, but you know Take is still a boy — "

"I deeply sympathize with you, dear aunt. I really ought not to be seen here, but this is a grave matter for the house of Kawashima, and I cannot keep silent when I think of what kindness you, Takeo-san, and my deceased uncle have shown me. And so I have been bold enough to call on you. Well, dear aunt, there is no disease so dangerous as consumption. You know there are many cases in which a husband has caught it from his wife, and the whole family has been swept away. I am very anxious about Takeo-san, and if you are not careful this will become a grave matter."

"You are right, I am also afraid of that, and I have told Takeo not to go to Zushi. But he won't hear me. Look here," pointing to the letter in her hand, "nothing but his wife, what the doctor said or the nurse did, and so on."

Chijiwa rejoined with a smile:

"But, aunt, that can't be helped. The love between husband and wife can never be too great. Takeo-san's care for his sick wife deserves nothing but praise."

"Well, but is it right for him to disobey his parents on account of his wife's sickness?"

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Chijiwa sighed.

"How things have changed! It was only yesterday that we thought Takeo-san was well mated, and you were pleased. But now has come the turning-point in the history of the house of Kawashima for good or for bad. And you have had some sort of sympathy from O-Nami-san's parents?"

"Oh, a mere formal call from that proud lady, with an unimportant present! From Kato we had visits two or three times, but — "

Chijiwa again heaved a sigh.

"In a time like this her parents should be quick to see our trouble. But how can they remain so indifferent, forcing such a sick girl upon us? Well, this is a world of self-interest. That is all."

"Undoubtedly."

"But what concerns us most is Takeo-san's health. If what we are fearing most should happen, it would be the end of the house of Kawashima. And he may contract the disease at any time. But since they are married you cannot keep them separate."

"Exactly."

"The duty of parents is not to let children always have their own way. Sometimes it is for their own good that you whip them. And then,

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young people may look very desperate at first, but after some time they change their minds quite readily."

"That is very true."

"You cannot risk the safety of the house of Kawashima for a little love or pity."

"Certainly not."

"And then, if by chance she be with child, that is the end of —"

"Exactly, that is the point."

Seeing that his aunt was impressed by his argument, Chijiwa felt his heart leap at his success, and at once changed his subject. He not only awaited a speedy circulation of the poison he had deposited in her mind, but he also found seed already sown, which, covered as it were with temporary reserve, would in time germinate, bloom, and bear fruit. And that time, he knew, was not far distant.

In her real self, Takeo's mother was not so bad as to despise Nami on any account. On the contrary, she appreciated Nami's effort to bring herself into accord with her mother-in-law in spite of the vast difference in culture and temper, rejoiced over their occasional coincidence in some points of taste, and even thought in her inmost

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heart, though she had never shown it, that she herself had been by no means the equal of Nami in her youth. But when she saw Nami, after a month's lingering sickness, the victim of an incurable disease, before her very eyes, and, again, when she saw that in spite of the expenditure of no small amount of money there was no hope of speedy recovery, she felt in her heart a strange feeling of disappointment or disgust, she knew not which. And, as her feelings gathered volume with every turn of thought, her reserve melted away before the growth of that stronger feeling of hatred.

Chijiwa, on his part, entered cleverly into every by-path of his aunt's mind, and, trying on his occasional visits to bring her to his way of thinking, awaited the time when an actual conflict should take effect. By the time Chijiwa's frequent calls on his aunt in Takeo's absence began to be talked about, he had already carried his main plan through, and had celebrated with Yamaki his success as the author of a coming drama.

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Chapter VI

Mother and Son

EARLY in May the warship on which Takeo was serving was to go south to a naval station at Saseho, and thence north to join a naval manœuvre of the united squadrons near Hakodate. And, as he had to be away for over a month, he went home one evening to take leave of his mother.

The widow had lately been out of sorts with Takeo, as if she had had a flea put into her ear. But this evening she was unusually pleasant, and looked personally after his comfort. Indifferent as he was to small things, Takeo felt discomposed at her unusual tenderness. But any boy, however old he gets, is happy to be loved by his mother. And Takeo was now particularly so after her recent ill-temper. Having eaten a good dinner, he allowed his thoughts to wander, as he was taking a bath and listening to the pattering sound of the rain-drops from the reminiscence of what he had seen that day at Zushi on his way home, to the happy time when Nami would recover from her illness and await his return. Refreshed by bathing and clad in a

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loose garment, he now entered his mother's room, rubbing his forehead with the palm of his right hand while he held a lighted cigar between his fingers.

The widow was just having her shoulders massaged by the maid, and was smoking her long pipe. She looked up as she said: "Have you finished so soon? You remind me of your father as he used to come out of his bath. Won't you sit down on that cushion? Matsu, all right; go and bring tea now."

The widow rose, and took down a cake-plate from the cupboard.

"You treat me like a guest, mother." Puffing his cigar, Takeo smiled.

"You came back just at the right time, Take. I had something to talk over, and wanted to see you. You stopped on your way at — Zushi?"

Although Takeo knew that his mother disliked his constant visits to Zushi, he was unable to deceive her.

"Yes, just for a short time. She seems to be getting well. She was very sorry to cause you trouble on her account."

"Was she?"

She watched Takeo's face closely.

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Just then the tea-things were brought in, and, as the widow took them, she said: "You are not needed for the present, Matsu. Shut the screen tight."

The widow poured out tea for Takeo and for herself. And, after sipping a cupful, she took up her long pipe, and, as she filled it, opened her lips.

"I am in very poor health. My last year's rheumatism almost resulted fatally. I went to visit the grave yesterday, and I still feel my bones ache. I feel as if I had one foot already in the grave. Take care of yourself, my dear Take, and never get sick."

Shaking the ashes from his cigar into the fire-box, Takeo looked at his mother, who, though extremely fleshy, had not a few wrinkles on her forehead.

"I am away nearly all the time, and there is no one besides you to take charge of the house. I wish Nami were well and able to help you. She is always saying that, too."

"Well, she may be thinking that, but I am afraid of consumption."

"But she is getting much better now. The weather is growing warmer, and, besides, she is young and may outgrow the disease."

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"Nevertheless, I doubt very much her speedy recovery, Take. I heard from the doctor that her mother also died of consumption."

"Yes, she told me that, too, but —"

"Consumption is hereditary, isn't it?"

"They say so, but Nami got it from a bad cold. Everything depends upon one's caution, you know. People talk about infection or heredity, but, in the point of fact, there are other causes. You know how strong Nami's father is, and then Nami's sister, — yes, O-Koma-san, — she has not shown the slightest signs of consumption. We are not so weak as doctors love to think." And he laughed.

"Yes, but it is not to be laughed away like that." Emptying her pipe by striking it against her hand, she continued: "I think this is the most dreadful of all diseases. You know, Take, the Governor Togo's family. The mother of that boy whom you used to quarrel with died of consumption about two years since. And Togo-san himself died of the same disease only six months ago. You know that, don't you? And then his son — he was an official engineer somewhere, I heard — also died of it lately. They all got it from one person. I can tell you many more cases like this. So, Take,

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we have to look out very sharply; if not, it will have serious results."

The widow, putting aside her pipe, leaned forward, and, looking sidewise into the face of Takeo, who was listening silently, continued: "I have something I want to talk over with you — " She hesitated a little, and fixed her eyes on Takeo. "Nami, you know — "

"What?" Takeo raised his face.

"What do you think of having Nami — called back?"

"Called back? What do you mean by calling her back?"

The widow, without taking her eyes off Takeo's face, said: "To her parents' house."

"Parents' house? You want her to be taken care of there?"

"Well, they may take care of her; but, at any rate, you should have her called back — "

"But Zushi is the best place for her. They have children at Kataoka's, and, besides, it would be far better for her to stay here if you want her to return to Tokyo."

Drinking her tea, which was cold by this time, the widow spoke with a tremor in her voice.

"Take, you are not drunk, I suppose. But why

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do you pretend to misunderstand me?" With a sharp look at Takeo's face, "What I meant is this — to send Nami back to her parents' house."

"Send back? Send back? Divorce, you mean?"

"Softly! You talk too loud, Take." Looking at her trembling son, she said: "Divorce — well, you may call it so."

"Divorce! Divorce! But why?"

"Why, you ask? As I told you before, it is because of the dangerous nature of her disease."

"Because of consumption — you want me to divorce Nami?"

"Yes, exactly, though I am sorry for it."

"Divorce!"

The cigar slipped from Takeo's hand and smoked furiously in the fire. The lamp burned with a hiss, and the night-rain spattered against the window-door.

Burying the smoking cigar in the ashes, the widow began to speak persuasively.

"I don't blame you for being so surprised at hearing this. It's too sudden to you, but I have thought it over for many days, and you must listen to me with that in mind. Now, there is nothing in Nami that displeases me particularly, so far as I see, and you like her, too. Therefore I very

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much hate to say such a thing. But, say what you will, the dangerous nature of the disease —"

"But she is recovering," Takeo interposed, hastily, and looked up to her defiantly.

"Listen to what I say. She may not be so bad now, but I have heard the doctor say that the disease will soon grow worse, although temporarily it may look all right. A change in the weather will easily bring this about. No one has ever been absolutely cured of consumption; that is what the doctor says. Though Nami is by no means seriously ill now, she will be sure to grow worse later, and you will certainly catch the disease. You may have a child, and he will inherit it. Suppose not only Nami, but you, the master of the house, and your child, the heir to your estates, all die of consumption. The house of Kawashima will utterly fall to the ground. In that way this house, whose fortune was founded by your father's industry, and was particularly favored by the Mikado, will be ruined in your own day. It is true that Nami is much to be pitied, that you feel very sorry for her, and that I myself as a mother feel very reluctant to propose such a thing, but think what her disease is. Much as she is to be pitied, Nami cannot change places with you, master of the house, or with the house of

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Kawashima itself. You will be wise enough to see the point and to make up your mind for good."

In the mind of Takeo, who listened all the while in silence, the face of the sick wife whom he had visited in the morning appeared clear as day.

"Mother, I cannot do such a thing."

"Why?" Her voice was raised a little higher.

"If you do so now, Nami will die."

"Very well, then, she must die. But, Take, I am more anxious for your life — for the house of Kawashima."

"If you think of me, mother, please feel with me. You may think it strange, but, really, I can't do it on any account. She is still young, and not yet competent to help you, but she loves you as well as me. How dare I to divorce such an innocent wife merely on account of her illness? There is no reason why consumption cannot be cured. Yes, she is now on the way to recovery. But if she must die, oh, mother, let her die as my wife. If the disease is dangerous, I may not visit her; I will use all my caution and do just as you like. But to divorce her is what I cannot do for all the world."

"Pooh! You speak only of Nami, but you have

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not thought of your own life and the house of Kawashima."

"You speak of my life only, but what use is there in living by cruel and unjust means? To act inhumanly and unjustly never does good to any house; and it is not to the honor and glory of the Kawashima house. I cannot divorce her — no, never."

Prepared as she was for some sort of opposition, the widow was rather surprised at Takeo's uncompromising attitude, and her easily excitable temper was thereby mercilessly aroused. The veins stood out on her forehead, the temples quivered, and the hand which held the pipe was shaking. But she struggled hard to repress her fury, and bravely tried to smile.

"Oh, d-don't get so excited. Think it over calmly. You are still young and don't know much about the world. But you know the saying, 'Save a large animal though you kill a smaller one.' Nami is the smaller animal, and you — the house of Kawashima — are a larger animal. I pity Nami and feel very sorry for her parents, but isn't it wrong to fall ill? Whatever they may think of us, it is far better not to bring the house of Kawashima to an end. You speak of injustice or inhumanity, but

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you can find many cases like this everywhere. It is right to divorce a wife when she is not contributing to the prestige of the house; it is right to do so when she fails to give birth to an heir; and it is right to do so when she contracts a dangerous disease. This is the rule, don't you know? There is no need of bringing in the question of justice or humanity. In a case like this, her parents ought to come to take her back. But, as they won't, what wrong is there in saying what we want them to do?"

"You say 'right, right,' but we have no right to do wrong because others do wrong. To divorce on account of illness — that is a thing of the past. But if that be the rule now, it is worth while to break it, indeed, we must break it. You are thinking of our family only, but how will Nami's family feel to have the daughter whom they have just given away sent back merely because of her illness? And then how could Nami go back without being humiliated? Imagine a case in which I am suffering from lung trouble, and they come to take Nami back because consumption is a dangerous disease! Would you like that? Yet it is the same thing."

"No, that is different. Women are not equal with men."

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"Yes, they are. They are equal at least in feeling. But, coming down to a more practical point, Nami has recently recovered from the attacks and has shown some sign of improvement. If you now do such a thing, it will cause a relapse. She will die — surely die. I couldn't do such a thing even to a stranger. Do you want me to — kill Nami?"

Takeo wept.

The widow stood up suddenly, and, taking down an ihai[1] from the household shrine, set it in front of Takeo.

"Look here, Takeo. You make light of my words, but repeat what you have been saying before your father. Repeat it. The spirits of your ancestors are looking at you. Say it once more. You disobedient son!"

Looking intently at Takeo, she struck her pipe repeatedly against the rim of the fire-box.

Mild as he was to his mother, Takeo now turned red in the face.

"How am I disobedient?"

"How? Why do you ask that? Is it not disobedient for the sake of your wife to ignore what your mother says? Is it not disobedient to think

[1] Ihai: a wooden tablet with a Buddhist name inscribed thereon, to represent the spirit of the dead.

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nothing of the body I brought up, and to ruin this ancestral house against my will? You are a disobedient son, Takeo, a violator of filial duties."

"But humanity —"

"Out with that word. Do you value your wife more than your parents? Fool! You talk only of wife, wife, but do you never think of your parents? You dog, always talking of Nami. We will disown you."

Takeo bit his lip, his eyes hot with tears.

"Mother, you are too cruel."

"Why cruel?"

"I have never had such ideas toward you. But you don't know my mind."

"Why, then, do you not obey me and divorce Nami?"

"But that —"

"No, no buts. Come, Takeo, you value either your wife or your mother. What? You value Nami? What? Humph! Fool!"

She struck the fire-box angrily with her pipe, which broke into pieces, the bowl flying off and hitting the screen.

At this, some one was heard on the other side of the screen, checking a half-uttered exclamation; and presently a trembling voice said: "E-excuse—me."

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"Who is it? What is it?"

"A telegram —"

Only two minutes intervened between Takeo's opening the screen and glancing over the paper and the maid's slipping away, frightened by the fierce gaze of the widow. But, in this brief time, their passion had cooled a little, and mother and son sat in dead silence.

The rain came down in torrents.

The widow opened her mouth at last. Her eyes still flashed anger, but her words were somehow softened.

"Take, I don't mean to do you any wrong, if I say this. You are my only child, and my sole pleasure is to have you rise in the world and to see the face of a sturdy grandson."

Takeo, who had been engrossed deeply in thought, raised his head heavily, and, showing the telegram, said: "They send me word that I must go at once. I must therefore start to-morrow at the latest. I shall be back after a month or so. You must never mention this matter till I return."

The next day Takeo received her assurance once more, and, visiting the family doctor and asking

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his careful attention to Nami, went down to Zushi by an afternoon train.

As he alighted, the sun set, and the crescent moon was hanging in the lavender sky. He crossed the bridge over a streamlet, and stood on a road which wound through a dusky pine grove. When he emerged from the grove and saw the tall pole of a well-bucket outlined dark against the evening sky, the unexpected sound of a harp was wafted to him.

"Ah, it is she that is playing," thought he, and, feeling as if his heart would break, he stood for a while at the gate to wipe away his tears. Nami was unusually well, and was expressing on the harp the longing in her heart for her husband.

Nami saw at once that something was on Takeo's mind, and he evaded her questions only by saying that he had sat up late the night before. He and Nami sat down to the dinner especially prepared for his coming, but they could eat but little. Nami wore a cheerless smile in order not to betray her sad heart, and was occupied in sewing buttons on her husband's coats and in brushing his garments carefully when the time for the last train drew near. When he could stay no longer, Takeo rose to go. Nami, clinging to his arm, said:

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"You must go now, dearest?"

"I'll be back soon. Take good care of yourself and get better."

Their hands were clasped tightly. At the porch, old Iku attended to his shoes, and the servant Mohei was waiting to see him to the station, a satchel in the left hand and a lighted lantern in the other.

"Well, Iku, I entrust Nami to your care. Nami-san, I am going."

"Come back soon, dear."

Takeo nodded. He walked about a dozen steps by the light of the lantern, and then looked back. Nami was standing by the gate with her white shawl on, and waving her handkerchief.

"Come back soon!"

"Yes, I will. You will get chilled outside. You'd better go in, Nami-san."

But a white dim figure stood there when he looked back for the second and the third time. Then he came to a turn in the road, and the figure was lost to view. Only for the third time the cry, "Come back soon!" followed him in tearful supplication. Down near the horizon the thin fast-sinking moon was seen through the pine-trees.

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Chapter VII

A Prospective Bride

WITH a lively shout announcing the master's return, Yamaki had been drawn up in a kuruma to the porch. Now, having taken a bath, he sat on a downy cushion in tailor fashion with his back to the alcove where early iris flowers were arranged in a vase, appearing at his ease and as if he were now his own master. Dinner was set before him. First he took some saké, and, with his wife O-Sumi as waitress, he cast on her a glance which though by no means discontented, seemed to take in her homely appearance.

The maid brought in an evening paper.

"Well, about Korea — the uprising threatening — what? China sends soldiers? Good. Japan will be sure to send soldiers, too. Then we'll have war. That will be a great opportunity for money-making. O-Sumi, you must have a cup also, in celebration of the event."

"Are we really going to have war?"

"Yes. Good! Good! But, O-Sumi, I have another good thing for you. I saw Chijiwa to-day,

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and he told me that the matter was progressing well."

"Is that so? Did Takeo-san give his consent?"

"Why, no. He is still away, and there is no possibility of getting his consent. But O-Nami-san has had another hemorrhage, and the widow has given up her last hope, and has said that she will carry out her intention during Takeo-san's absence. The thing will surely be done if Chijiwa continues to egg her on. It would be extremely difficult to carry out the plan when Takeo-san is at home, and the widow intends to make short work of it while he is away. Everything then will work all right for our benefit. Here, your ladyship, fill up."

"O-Nami-san is to be pitied."

"You are a very peculiar woman. You wanted to get rid of O-Nami-san because O-Toyo was to be pitied, and now the thing is about to succeed, and you begin to pity O-Nami-san! Have done with such nonsense. Try to think how you can put O-Toyo in her place."

"But I am afraid that Takeo-san will be very angry if he finds O-Nami-san divorced in his absence."

"Well, he may, but his anger will avail nothing if the matter is settled. And then, Takeo-san is

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a good boy, so, if the widow weeps, he will let the matter pass in silence. I am pretty sure of that. Well, so far so good. Now, as regards the matter of vital importance, — that is, Lady O-Toyo, — we will wait a little till his fiery feeling is somewhat dampened, and then send her to him, invited or not, under the pretence of learning good manners. Of course, we shall pay board and all other expenses. Why, it is not so difficult as it first appears to be. All depends upon the widow's whim. If O-Toyo be Baroness Kawashima, she will obtain her dearest wish, and I, as a father-in-law, must supervise the property of Kawashima House, Takeo-san being a mere child, you know. That is nice — well, too nice not to be troublesome. But let it be. Our immediate concern, however, is about O-Toyo."

"Won't you take rice now?"

"Never mind; this is a celebration, you know. But you must look after her manners a little more closely. If not, she will be spoiled. Such fretting every day will be sure to discourage any mother-in-law, even if she be a Goddess of Mercy."

"But then I can't instruct her by myself. You always — "

"Oh, don't. I hate that sort of excuse. Proof

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is better than argument, they say. I'll show you how to instruct. Call in O-Toyo."

"Miss, your father wants to see you."

At the voice of the maid Také, Toyo, who had just finished her evening toilet, but was still unable to leave the glass, turned around leisurely.

"All right, just a moment." Touching her hair: "Say, Také, isn't it a little disarranged here?"

"No, not at all. How charming you look!"

"Thank you." She looked at the glass and smiled.

Také, taking off her sleeve, with which she had covered her mouth, and composing herself, said: "Your father is waiting for you."

"I know. I am coming."

Taking her last lingering look in the glass, she passed through several rooms in haste and went to her father's room.

"Oh, O-Toyo, we are waiting for you. Come here. Fill my cup in place of your mother. Oh, don't put down the bottle so roughly. That doesn't show your training in tea-serving. That is right; do it so, gracefully."

Yamaki, already mellow with saké, drank again

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in spite of his wife's warning, as he resumed: "O-Toyo looks charming if properly dressed like this, doesn't she, O-Sumi? Her complexion is fair."

Toyo smirked and twisted herself almost into the shape of the letter S.

"Graceful in form and quite charming in speech on a proper occasion. Only her front teeth, like her mother's, protrude a little."

"Hyozo!" O-Sumi knit her brows. Toyo, feeling as if she had drunk vinegar after eating candy, made a sweet-sour face.

"Raise the ends of your eyes one-third of an inch, and you will improve your looks."

"Hyozo!" O-Sumi would have wished to shut the door of his mouth if it had been provided with one.

"There! Why are you provoked, O-Toyo? That will spoil your looks. You need not look so unpleasant. See here. I have some good news for you. Fill up once more for my trouble, and I'll break it to you."

Draining the cup filled to the brim, Yamaki proceeded with a cheerful smile.

"We were just talking about Takeo-san."

Like a horse which had spent unhappy days by an empty manger, and at last awakened to the

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fragrance of spring weeds, Toyo raised her head and pricked up her ears.

"You scratched O-Nami-san's picture, so she has at last been smitten with your curse."

"Hyozo!" Madam O-Sumi knit her brows for the third time.

"Now to the point. At any rate, O-Nami-san is very ill, and for that reason she will be divorced. No, the matter has not yet been presented to her parents, and O-Nami-san herself does not know anything about it, but at all events it will soon be settled. There comes the trouble of finding a substitute. Now this is the point: your mother and I want to let you step into the shoes of O-Nami-san. No, it cannot be so soon, so we will send you to Kawashima as a maid — wait, don't be so astonished — as a candidate, you know, under the pretext of learning good manners. Now, your success hinges on the widow's pleasure, you understand. That is the point."

He stopped for breath, and glanced from his wife's face to that of his daughter.

"This is the point, O-Toyo. It's a little early, but I want to impress it on you. As you know, Takeo-san's mother is known for her crossness, selfishness, and obstinacy, — oh, excuse me, I am

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forgetting that she is your future mother, — but, at any rate, she is not a gentle lady, as is your mother sitting there. But she is not a devil or a snake, but a human being. If you only acquire tact, you can be a wife even to a devil or a snake. Why, if I were a woman, I could make the widow or any one like her as soft as gingerbread in two days. Well, my pride will avail you nothing, but I can instruct you how to act. Now, you must pay attention to what I say, O-Toyo. If you go there as maid, — that is, as a disguised candidate for a bride, — first of all you must not be so lazy as now. You will have to get up early in the morning — old persons, you know, are early risers — and attend carefully to the widow's things, though you neglect other matters. And secondly, you must not be easily provoked as you are now; you will have to yield in every case. Do you understand?

"You must yield when you are scolded; you must yield when any unreasonable demand is made; you even must yield when you are right. Then they will meet you half-way. This is what is meant by the saying, to lose is to gain. You must never be provoked, you understand? Thirdly, — this is rather too early, but I tell you now that I have the chance, — suppose at last you are married. You

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must be careful not to live happily with Takeo-san.

"No, I don't care what you do in secret, but I mean you must be careful how you act toward him openly. Be familiar with your mother-in-law, but to your husband you must be bold enough to read him a bit of a harmless lesson before her. A mother should be glad to see that her daughter-in-law is much attached to her son, but, strange to say, she does not generally like it. Well, it's jealousy or selfishness. But, aside from that, if you care too much for your husband, you are apt to neglect your mother-in-law. At least, she thinks so. O-Nami-san may have made a blunder in that way, being too happy with Takeo-san. Oh, don't look so jealous. You must yield these, as I told you. So you must let the widow feel that you are her bride and not her son's. Quarrels between a mother and her daughter-in-law generally arise from the former's feeling of isolation on account of the too happy condition of the young couple. So think of yourself as the bride of the widow. After it is all over with her by and by, you may even walk about clinging to the neck of Takeo-san. But in the presence of the widow, you must not even smile upon him. I have some more advice for you,

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but will reserve it until you are ready to go. These three things are quite enough at present. Since you are to be a wife to your dearest Takeo-san, you must do your best to deny yourself. Begin now and do the best you can."

Before he had concluded, the screen was opened, and the maid Také brought in a letter. Yamaki broke the seal, ran his eye over the letter, and flourished it before the faces of his wife and daughter.

"Look here. Widow Kawashima wants to see me at once!"

Two weeks after Takeo went to the naval manœuvre, and a few days before Yamaki was summoned to the house of Kawashima, Nami had another hemorrhage, and the doctor was called in a hurry. Luckily it was slight, and she was assured of her safety for the present, but this news gave no small incentive to Takeo's mother. A day or two later, the corpulent figure of Widow Kawashima, rarely seen outside her gate, was on the way to Kato's at Iidamachi.

On the evening the divorce question was discussed between the widow and her son, she met Takeo's unexpectedly firm opposition, and had

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promised to let the matter remain unsettled till his return. But she doubted if he would yield by that time; indeed, on the contrary, she feared that time would rather strengthen his attachment to Nami, and moreover, that some unforeseen obstacle might present itself. Therefore, she thought it best to settle the matter at once in her son's absence, but, nevertheless, a vague sort of fear, as well as her promise, kept her from taking a step decisive enough to satisfy Chijiwa, who came often to urge her on. The report of Nami's second hemorrhage, however, turned the scale completely, and induced the widow to call on Kato, who had acted as middleman in her son's marriage.

Although they were neighbors, the widow hardly ever visited the Kato family, except the once when she returned thanks for their assistance in the marriage. So her unexpected call naturally aroused the suspicion of Madam Kato that there was some unusual trouble on hand. She received the guest courteously. But when she heard what had brought the widow, she felt as if her heart were pierced. Who would have thought that she should be asked to break the tie asunder with the same hands that had joined the two houses of Kataoka and Kawashima!

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Madam Kato could only watch her guest, wondering what sort of assurance she possessed to come to her and utter unblushingly such heartless words. But the widow sat self-composed, with her body corpulent and erect, and her hands locked on her knees. Surely, Madam Kato thought, the widow was not joking, nor was she out of her wits. But, as she finally was compelled to admit that the widow was saying what she meant, her surprise was replaced by the kindling fire of her wrath. Harsh words to rebuke the widow for her too selfish position were about to escape from the lips of Madam Kato. But, by an effort, she was able to check them for the sake of Nami, who was dear to the lady as her own daughter, and, instead, she asked the reasons, combated them mildly, sympathized with the widow's position, and finally entreated her forbearance. This last, however, failed to reach the widow's ear. On the contrary, she showed by a glance her contempt for such useless loquacity, and in that way reminded the lady that her business was merely to carry the widow's message to Nami's parents. Before Madam Kato's eyes, as she listened to the widow, floated the picture of her sick niece, of the death-bed of her sister, Nami's mother, and of the general, anxious for his daughter's

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welfare. And, as her feelings gathered volume and her eyes were clouded with tears, Madam Kato rose up bravely and gave a flat refusal, without stopping to wait for her husband's opinion, saying that, though the house of Kato had had the honor of assisting the two families to unite in the bond of love, they could not defile their hands in such an unjust and unhuman cause.

The widow went home enraged, and sent for Yamaki by letter that very evening. She thought that honest Tazaki was too slow for such important business. On Madam Kato's part, her husband being away, she was puzzled very much what to do, but, with the help of her daughter Chizu, did her best to ascertain the whereabouts of Takeo's ship, and wrote him in haste, thinking, in spite of the widow's statement, that he was opposed to such a step. While this was being done, the enraged widow made up her mind to make a direct application, and, having commissioned Yamaki for that purpose, his kuruma was soon on the way to the house of Kataoka.

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Chapter VIII

The Recall

JUST as Yamaki's kuruma was entering the gate of Lieutenant-General Kataoka's house at Akasaka, a brave-looking military officer emerged on horseback. Taking alarm at the noise made by the kuruma as it dashed in, the horse shied, and almost stood erect on his hind legs. The soldier, however, bringing him down easily by reining in and circling once, rode out of the gate.

Watching the elegant figure of the rider, as he rode off, and clearing his throat, Yamaki neared the stately porch. He had been accustomed to visit the houses of many illustrious officials, but now he felt his heart strangely failing within him. The night before, when he was commissioned by the Widow Kawashima for this day's business, he felt somewhat embarrassed, but when he came actually to face it, he pitied himself for the comparative weakness of his heart, which he had prided himself was as bold as brass.

After his card had been sent in and the attendant had appeared for the second time, Yamaki was

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shown to the reception-room. On a table was spread a map of China and Korea, which, with burnt matches and a heap of ashes on the small tray, brought to mind the topic which must recently have been discussed. Indeed, the uprising in Korea, the movement of Chinese troops, and the rumored despatch of the Japanese army was attracting the attention of the whole world at this time, and, though he was on the reserved list, the general had so much to occupy his mind that he was entirely robbed of the time he used to spend over the English reader.

Yamaki sat down, and was looking around the room curiously, when the sound of footsteps like distant thunder was heard approaching, and a man massive as a mountain came into the room and took a seat at the further end. Yamaki rose up hurriedly at the general's entrance, and, in so doing, he upset his chair. With a word or two of surprise and excuse, he raised it confusedly, and made three or four courteous bows to the master. It is possible that he was saluting and apologizing for his rudeness at the same time.

"Please take a seat. You are Yamaki-kun? I knew your name, but —"

"I am very glad to make your acquaintance. I

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am Hyozo Yamaki," adding, as one might in wishing to seem very humble, "and an awkward person." He made a bow at the end of each phrase, and every time he did so the chair creaked, as if it were amusedly exclaiming, "That is right!"

A few informal words on unimportant topics and some remarks on Korean questions, and then the general formally asked Yamaki the object of his call. Yamaki first cleared his throat, trying to open his lips; he did so again and for the third time before he could say a word. He wondered how his fluent words should stick in his throat only at that time.

At last Yamaki spoke.

"I was sent by the house of Kawashima on a certain matter."

The general fixed his narrowed eyes on Yamaki, as if in surprise.

"Well?"

"Widow Kawashima was to come herself, but I was asked to call instead."

"I understand."

Yamaki mopped his brow, the sweat oozing out in spite of him. "They wanted Viscountess Kato

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to speak for them," he continued, "but, as she was unwilling, they sent me instead."

"I see, and what about?"

"It is about this. I hesitate to say it, but Madam Kawashima, your daughter —"

The general riveted his eyes on the speaker for a while without winking.

"Well?"

"It is about the young viscountess. We hesitate to say so, but we have been very anxious about her illness, as you know, and, though she is now somewhat better, and we are very glad of it —"

"I see."

"We hate to tell you ourselves, as it presumes too much on your kindness, but, as her illness is of very doubtful nature, and as you know the Kawashima family is small, and the present master, Takeo-san, is the only man in the house, the widow feels very anxious about him. We very much hesitate to say, as it presumes too much on your kindness, but the nature of her illness is such that, if it should ever infect — why, in all probability, it may not happen — but it is better to be on the safe side, and if perchance Takeo-san, the master of the house, be in danger, it will result in the annihilation of the Kawashima line. Well,

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such an annihiliation may not be of much account nowadays, but anyhow — to tell the truth — I loathe to say — but — as the nature of her illness is such that — "

Yamaki faltered, and beads of sweat stood on his brow, as he stumbled further and further into his speech. The general, who had watched him in silence, raised his right hand at this moment.

"All right; I understand. In short, Nami's disease is dangerous, so you want me to call her back? All right. I understand."

He nodded, and, putting his close-burnt cigar on the ash-tray, folded his arms.

Feeling as if he had been helped out of the mire, Yamaki breathed freely and mopped his brow.

"You understand me rightly. It is very awkward for me to say, but I pray you will not take it amiss."

"And Takeo-san is back?"

"No, he isn't. But of course he knows all about the matter. So I am sure you will not take it in bad part."

"Very well."

The general nodded again, and remained for awhile with his eyes shut and his arms folded. Putting a good face on his comparatively easy suc-

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cess, Yamaki looked up and saw the general closing his eyes and compressing his lips. Then he felt that there was something awesome in the countenance of his host.

"Yamaki-kun!"

The general opened his eyes and studied the face of Yamaki.

"Yes?" said Yamaki.

"You have children, I suppose?" asked the general.

Yamaki, being unable to guess the real import of the question, but, making a bow: "Yes, sir, a son and a daughter."

"Yamaki-kun, you know how dear a child is to you?"

"Yes?"

"Very well, I will consent to the request. Please tell Widow Kawashima to be at ease. Nami shall be called back to-day. I am sorry to trouble you in this matter."

Yamaki arose and bowed many times, presumably being glad at having fulfilled his mission and in part sorry for the trouble occasioned by his visit.

The general saw the caller to the porch, and, returning, shut himself up in his study.

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Chapter IX

The Home-Coming

AFTER the departure of Takeo, Nami was very lonely, and the days hung heavily at the villa of Zushi. But she somehow managed to endure five weeks there, and at last the wheat had been reaped, and the time for wild lilies arrived. She lost heart over her condition for a time, but, luckily, the doctor reassured her, and she soon regained her courage. Comforted by a recent letter from her husband at Hakodate, she did her best to follow the doctor's instructions and to get well, and waited impatiently for Takeo's return. During the last few days, however, all communication with Tokyo had ceased, and no word had reached her from her house at Bancho, from her parents, or from her aunt in Iidamachi.

She was now trying to arrange wild lilies in a vase in order to kill time. Speaking to her maid, who had just brought in some water, she said: "Say, Iku, isn't it strange that no mail comes?"

"I should say so," replied the old woman. "Perhaps they are all well, and have nothing to write

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us. But it will not be long before you hear, and besides, some one may drop in this very morning. How beautiful the flowers are! How I wish our master would come back before they wither away!"

Nami looked at the lilies in her hand, and said: "Beautiful, indeed! But better to have them stay where they were, I think. It seems cruel to cut them off like this."

At this moment, a kuruma was heard approaching the gate of the villa. It was the Viscountess Kato. She had felt uneasy the day after she rejected the request of Widow Kawashima, and, accordingly, she went to the house of Kataoka and learned, to her great surprise, that a deputy of the house of Kawashima had already been there, and had gone back with the consent of the general. She was very much annoyed that not only was her plan to wait for the return of Takeo frustrated, but that the matter had gone so far beyond her power. But, since there was no help, she at least wanted to see her niece at Zushi, for Nami's father feared the shock to her when she learned the news so far from home, and bring her to her father's house.

"Well, how glad I am to see you, dear aunt. We've just been talking of you."

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"Very glad to see you, Viscountess," said Iku, and, turning to Nami, "Don't you see, madam, that Iku was right?"

"How do you feel, my dear Nami-san? Nothing serious since the last attack, I hope." But she was unable to look straight into Nami's eyes.

"Nothing at all, thank you," said Nami. "I am getting better. But how are you, dear aunt? You do not look well."

"I? Why, I've got a little headache; perhaps it's the weather. But have you heard from Takeo-san lately?"

"Yes, he wrote me the day before yesterday from Hakodate. He is coming back pretty soon. No, the date is not fixed. He says he has something for me."

"Is that so?" said Madam Kato. "It's — t' — late — now — Two o'clock, isn't it?"

"Why are you in such a hurry?" asked Nami. "Make yourself quite at home. How is O-Chizu-san?"

"Oh, she sent her love to you."

Saying this, her aunt took a cup of tea from Iku, but she was so abstracted that she forgot to drink it.

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"Please make yourself at home," Iku begged. "Madam, I'll get you some nice fish."

"Yes, please."

Her aunt started as if awakened, looked at Nami's face for a moment, and then turned away her eyes.

"No, don't. I have not time to-day. Nami-san — you are to go with me."

"I am to go? Where?" Nami was surprised.

"Yes; your father wants to see you about your illness on the doctor's advice. Your mother at Bancho — she also agrees."

"He wants to see me? What about?"

"About your illness, as I told you. And then — your father has missed you so long — "

"Is that so?"

Nami wore a suspicious air, and so did Iku.

"But you will remain here this evening?" said Iku.

"No, I can't. The doctor is waiting, you know, and it's better to go before dark. We must start by the next train."

"Indeed!"

Old Iku was surprised. Nami also could not understand the situation. But it was her aunt who brought the message, and it was her father who sent

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for her, and besides, her mother-in-law knew of the summons. At any rate, she hastened her preparation without further questioning.

"What are you thinking about so much, aunt? There is no need for nurse to go, as I shall soon be back."

Her aunt, leaving her seat, and helping Nami to dress, said: "Take her with you; you will need her."

By four o'clock, three kuruma were ready at the gate. Presently they all came out. Nami put on a light crape dress of silver gray, with a belt of sky-blue satin, a white flower of cape jasmine in her hair, and a tawny parasol in her right hand. Covering her mouth with her handkerchief as she coughed, she said:

"Well, Iku, I shall be gone for a while. Yes, it's quite a long time since I left there. And then that dress I have been making — just a little of it is still left. Well, all right. I'll do it myself when I come back. It will certainly be ready before his return."

Her aunt hid her face in the parasol, tears coming into her eyes before she could check them.

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There is a pit of fate silently awaiting our approach. We walk into it unconsciously and unavoidably. A cold feeling, however, of indescribable fear will assail us as we draw near the spot.

Nami, who started home without much questioning on account of her trust in her aunt and her joy at the prospect of meeting her father, felt her heart throb no sooner than she was in the kuruma. The more she thought over her situation, the more she found herself at sea. She doubted the truth of her aunt's words as to her unusual look, and she was unable to clear her mind while on the train. When she had arrived at Shinbashi Station, her mind was so weighed with vague foreboding that she almost forgot the joy of returning home after a long absence.

Nami alighted from the train, and, assisted by her nurse, followed her aunt slowly at the end of the crowd. As she passed the gate, a military officer happened to be standing near by. He was talking, and, turning toward Nami suddenly, he exchanged a look with her. It was Chijiwa. Looking at her intently, he uncovered his head purposely and — smiled. That look and that smile sent a strange tremor into her heart, and, pale as ashes, Nami felt a disagreeable chill which did not come

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from her illness, — a chill which continued till long after she drove off in the carriage.

Her aunt did not speak, and Nami also remained silent. The evening sun that shone on the carriage window went down, and they reached the house of Kataoka in the dusky air, soft with the faint fragrance of chestnut blossoms. There were carts and litters near the gate, and a lamp burning bright at a side porch. Men were heard speaking inside, and the whole scene suggested a removal. Wondering what these things meant, Nami alighted from the carriage with the help of her aunt and nurse, when Madam Kataoka appeared at the porch to meet them, and said:

"Oh, so soon. I thank you for your trouble."

The eyes of Madam Kataoka glided from the face of Nami to that of Madam Kato.

"How do you do, mother?" asked Nami. "And — where's father?"

"He is in his study," Madam Kataoka answered, briefly.

At this moment the merry voices of her younger brother and sister were heard shouting Nami's name, and, without heeding their mother's caution, they rushed toward her. Koma also came out after them.

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"Oh, Mi-chan and Ki-chan, how are you? Oh, here is Koma-chan."

Michi, hanging on a sleeve of her sister, said:

"I am so happy. You will always stay here with us. Your things have all come."

No one dared to hush the young speaker, and the gaze of her stepmother, aunt, Koma, and maids were all focussed on the face of Nami.

"What?"

Nami was astonished, and shifted her eyes from the face of her stepmother, over that of her aunt, to the things piled up in a room by the porch. There was no mistaking that they were her toilet-stand, cabinets, and dress-boxes, all of which had been left at her house.

Nami trembled all over, and, staggering, gripped firmly her aunt's hand.

All wept.

Heavy footsteps being heard, her father now appeared on the scene.

"Oh, father!"

"My dear child, how I have longed to see you."

The general clasped Nami's little shivering body into his broad breast.

A half-hour passed, and silence reigned in the house. In the general's study were two persons,

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— father and child. They were in the same position as on the day she left that house never to return, Nami listening to the last teaching of her father, — the child kneeling and weeping on the knees of her father, and the father caressing gently his sobbing daughter.

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Chapter X

Takeo and His Mother

"EXTRA! Extra! Extra on the Korean problem!" Thus shouting, a newsboy went by ringing an alarm-bell. And after him, a kuruma was seen drawing up at the gate of the house of Kawashima at Bancho. Takeo had returned home.

The widow knew that Takeo would be angry when he learned what had been done during his absence, but he wins who thrusts his sword first, and, on the very day Yamaki had brought her the good news, she at once sent back to the house of Kataoka everything that belonged to Nami. She thought it a little cruel, but as nothing short of imperative measures would suffice, she was satisfied with the steps she had taken, and was in good spirits for two or three days thereafter. On the other hand, the servants, naturally siding with the young couple, held their breath at the ruthless act of the widow, and expected a scene on Takeo's return. And, in the midst of the situation, Takeo came back. The letter Madam Kato sent hurriedly to inform Takeo of what had happened crossed him on

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the way, and of course his mother did not mention the subject to him in her letter. So he remained totally ignorant of his real position, and took the first opportunity to come home on reaching Yokosura Naval Station.

A chambermaid, who came from the direction of the sitting-room, beckoned to a maid who was making tea, and said: "Say, Mat-chan, our master does not seem to know anything about the matter. He even brought home something for his wife."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Matsu. "Where on earth can you find another mother who would divorce her son's wife during his absence? But wait and see how angry he will get. She is an old devil!"

"So she is," said the chambermaid. "I have never seen such a cross, stingy, and unreasonable woman. She scolds us, but she doesn't know anything herself. The truth is that she was only the daughter of a poor farmer in Satsuma. I hate to stay in such a place."

"But isn't our master rather slow in finding out that his own wife is divorced?"

"Why, no, that couldn't be helped," continued the chambermaid. "He was far away, you know. No one would expect that a mother would drive

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her son's wife away without consulting him, as if she were a mere servant. And then he is still young, you know. I feel sorry for him, but still more for his wife. How is she feeling, I wonder — ugh! There, the old woman has begun to roar. Mat-chan, if you don't mind your business, you will be scolded."

In an inner room, the voices of the widow and her son were heard growing louder and louder.

"But you promised me to wait till my return," expostulated Takeo. "And you did not even write me, and have done this on your own responsibility. I cannot bear it. I stopped at Zushi on my way here, and, as I did not find Nami, I asked Iku about her. She said that Nami had come to Tokyo on some business. I felt queer about it, but I never dreamed that you — This is too much for me."

"Well, I was wrong," the widow was heard to say, "and I apologize. I didn't dislike Nami at all, but because I love you — "

"You are always thinking of me, but have no regard for honor, reputation, or human feelings."

"Takeo, you are a man and not a woman, I suppose? You still think of Nami, despite your mother's humiliating herself?"

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"But what you have done is more than I can stand," said Takeo.

"Nevertheless, it is too late now. They have agreed, and the matter is settled once for all. What can you now do against it? I tell you, if you do anything foolish, it will bring shame not only to your mother but to yourself."

Takeo, who was listening silently, bit his lip angrily. He rose suddenly and crashed to pieces a basket of choice apples brought for his sick wife. He said:

"Mother, you have killed Nami and me, too. I will never see you again."

Takeo went back at once to his war-vessel at Yokosura.

The Korean problem drawing near to a crisis, the Japanese government declared war against China about the middle of July. And on the eighteenth of the same month, Vice-Admiral Kabayama was made Chief of the Ordnance Bureau, and the *Matsushima,* flag-vessel to the combined fleets, on board of which was Takeo, was ordered to meet the other vessels at Saseho. Preferring to be a target for a shell rather than to preserve his useless life, Takeo immediately left on duty for the West.

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General Kataoka at once built a cozy house for Nami in a quiet, sunny nook of his spacious estate, and, calling old Iku from Zushi, directed her to live there with his daughter. In September he was restored to duty, and, after entrusting Nami most tenderly to the care of his wife, he went down on the thirteenth of the month to the military headquarters at Hiroshima, in the imperial suite, and the next month sailed for the Liaotong Peninsula with General Oyama, Yamaji, and others.

All the passion and conflict in the minds of those whom we have followed thus far were for a while carried away in the great national agitation over the China-Japan War.

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Book Three

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Chapter I

Battle off Yalu River

IT was five o'clock in the afternoon of the sixteenth of September, 1894, when our combined squadrons, ready for action, steamed out of the mouth of the River Tai-dong toward the northwest. They went in search of the enemy's fleet, reported to have been seen near the River Yalu, protecting Chinese transports, and intended to engage in a decisive battle.

With the *Yoshino* as flag-ship, the First Flying Squadron, consisting of the *Takashiho,* the *Naniwa,* and the *Akitsushima,* sailed first. Then followed the Main Squadron of the *Chiyoda, Itsukushima, Hashidate, Hiyei,* and *Fuso,* with the *Matsushima* as flag-ship. Next came the gunboat *Akagi,* and the armored merchant-vessel *Saikyo-maru,* with the Chief of the Ordnance Bureau on board, who, it was said, wanted to see an engagement. The twelve vessels, in one long line, left the port that afternoon, and, ploughing the waves of the Yellow Sea, moved on like a huge sea-serpent. After a while the sun sank into the sea, and the full moon rose in

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the east, the ships riding on golden and silvery wavelets, and drifting in the clear moonlight.

In the gun-room of the *Matsushima,* supper was over, and, though the officers on duty had left long ago, still a few lads remained and were engaged in a lively talk. The stern windows being tightly closed, so as not to let light escape, the room was warm, and the red faces of the full-blooded youths were deeply flushed. On a table were some cups and saucers and a plate of cakes, which had been done justice to, — all but one last slice, waiting its sad doom at the hands of some future admiral.

"The army may have already captured Phyong-yang," said a small spirited ensign, as he looked around at his fellow officers, resting his cheek on his arm. "But how about the navy? Look at these idle hours!"

A well-fed assistant paymaster smilingly remarked from his corner: "Don't you know that the play will be over no sooner than the curtain is raised? It's fun to have a long intermission."

"Oh, away with such idle talk. I am tired of playing blind-man's-buff with the *Pei-yang.* If we miss them again this time, I can't rest till we force our way into the Gulf of Pechili, and visit the Fort of Taku with a shell."

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A certain cadet questioned him earnestly:

"That is the same thing as to enter into a bag. What will you do if you are blockaded?"

"What? Blockaded? I wish we were. But I'm sorry to say they are not active enough to blockade us. I don't mean to discourage you, but it seems to me that our intended encounter this time will rather miscarry. I don't know what to do with the everlasting slowness of the Chinese."

At this moment, footsteps were heard, and a tall ensign appeared at the doorway.

The small ensign turned around. "Hullo, navigating officer! What news? Anything in sight?"

"Only the moon. You'd better go to bed and get a good rest as soon as the roll is called." Eating the piece of cake left on the plate, he continued: "Stay a little while — on deck — and you will get awfully hungry. Bring some more cake, boy."

Another ensign, with a red shirt on, smiled and wondered at his appetite. The tall ensign remarked, in reply: "How about you, my dear friend? Isn't it our privilege, heroes of the gun-room, to eat cakes and look down upon the veterans? But say, fellow, don't you know that the marines could not sleep for joy to-morrow? If we blunder to-morrow, it will not be the fault of the marines, but of — "

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"Oh, we have no doubt of our courage," asserted a mate, the oldest one of the group. "What we desire is nothing but nerve. Beware of rashness."

"Speaking of that, I was surprised at the sub-captain of No. —— corps," remarked another of the group. "Such industry! But, though we make light of our lives, he goes too far in remarking that he is selling his life at a bargain!"

"Oh, you mean Kawashima? Yes, I remember once — oh, it was at the demonstration off Wei-hai-wei that he performed such a dangerous feat. If you made him commander-in-chief, he might, perhaps, like Number Three, lead our fleet into the Gulf of Pechili, and, not satisfied with Taku, would send them up the Pei-ho, and try to capture old Li-Hung Chang."

"And then he is quite changed. He gets angry at nothing. Once I joked him about the Baroness Kawashima, when he turned black, and was about to knock me down. I am more afraid of his blow than of a 30-centimetre shell from the *Ting-yuen*. I suspect something has happened to him. Say, Garibaldi, you are his great friend, and you know the secret." The navigating officer looked into the face of the man with a red shirt, nicknamed Garibaldi.

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At this moment, the boy brought in a plateful of cakes, and the idle gun-room talk ended.

At ten in the evening, the roll was called. Those on duty reported at their respective quarters, and the rest went to bed. Loud talking and kindling of fire were prohibited; the upper and lower decks were silent as if deserted. Except the solitary commanding voice of the chief navigating officer, only the sound of the screw and the ceaseless beating of the engine, like that of an enormous heart, were heard, while the silent smoke from the funnels was drifting white in the moon.

On the forward bridge, two human shadows were seen. One remained standing at the left end of the bridge, and the other was walking noiselessly to and fro.

The latter was Takeo Kawashima. He was the sub-captain of No. —— corps, and, with the chief navigating officer, was keeping his four hours' watch on the bridge.

He now reached the right end. He raised his glass and looked far around him. Seeing nothing, he lowered his right hand, and stood with his left hand on the rail. Two officers, talking in low tones, came from the front gun, and, passing under the

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bridge, disappeared into the shadow. Everything was quiet on the deck, the wind growing chill and the moon shedding her crystal light.

Stretching beyond the dark figures of the watchers on the prow, nothing was visible but the white waters of the Yellow Sea, except the faint shadow of a rocky island on the port side, and the still fainter body of the *Akitsushima* ahead. The autumn sky high above the mainmast, toward which the sparks from the funnels now hurried forth and vanished, was studded with scattered stars, and the milky way, shorn of its lustre, stretched pale from sea to sea.

Three months had passed since Takeo left his mother in anger.

But what changes he had lived through during those days! First, his mind had been stirred up by the threatening Korean problem, and then, on the Bay of Saseho, his heart had been wrung by the sad strains of farewell music. The declaration of war had almost doubled his courage, and the bombardment of Wei-hai-wei had given him for the first time a baptism of fire. Things wonderful to his mind and eyes followed one after another, and did not allow him time even to stop to think. So

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much the better for him; for he was thereby able to avoid dwelling upon the one thing that consumed his soul. In his country's hour of trial, his private affairs, though they were a question of life or death to him, were lost sight of. Thus he thought, and, burying his grief, followed his duty, and with all his desperate courage engaged in battle. To him, indeed, death was of no more value than a particle of dust.

But whenever there came a peaceful evening on the bridge, or a sleepless night in his hammock, he was at the mercy of his unbearable feelings. Time went by. And now the intensity of the passion before which everything had given way was dulled, and his anger, hardened as it were, secretly consumed his soul. His mother wrote him twice, and hoped for his safe return. Moody as he was, he thought how lonely his old mother was, and, apologizing for his rashness, wished her well. But his feeling toward her could never be changed. It was sunk deep in his breast, and night after night he saw, through his dream over the destruction of the Pei-yang Squadron and his death in the battle, the face of the sick girl wrapped in a snow-white shawl.

Three months passed with no news about her.

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Was she still living? No? Yes, she was. As never a day passed without thinking of her, so it must be with her, too. Did they not pledge to live and die together?

Takeo thought this. And he thought again of the time he had seen her last. Ah, where was she who, on that dim evening at Zushi, cried after him to come back soon, as she stood at the gate to see him off? Pensively he looked up when he felt as if a slender form in a white shawl were about to step out of the clear moon.

Perhaps to-morrow the fleet would meet the enemy. And, if he should be killed by a shell, his life would be but a dream. He thought of it, and then of his mother, who would be left behind him. He thought also of his dead father, and of the days he spent at Yedajima. And again his mind would turn to Nami-san.

"Kawashima!"

Takeo hurriedly turned around at a slap on his shoulder. It was the chief navigating officer.

"How beautiful the night is! We can hardly believe that we are going to war."

Nodding assent, Takeo brushed aside his tears, and raised his glass. The moon was white, and

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nothing was visible but the vast expanse of the water.

The moon had set and the sky was turning purple. The seventeenth of September was dawning on the Yellow Sea. It was about six in the morning, and the fleet was already near Haiyang Island. The gunboat *Akagi* had been ordered to reconnoitre the inlets of the island, but to no purpose. The fleet sailed along and was soon off Takooshan, with Talu and Seolu Islands on the port side.

It was eleven o'clock. Takeo at that moment left the wardroom, and was about to step on deck when a voice was heard crying, "Smoke!"

At the same time, hurried footsteps were heard on deck. With his heart beating furiously, Takeo stopped on the stair. A seaman who happened to pass below also stopped and exchanged a look with him.

"Is the enemy in sight?"

"It seems so."

Springing excitedly on deck, Takeo found men running right and left, whistles shrieking, and a signal-flag being hoisted on the mast. At the bow, marines stood in groups, and on the bridge the commander, vice-commander, and other officers all gazed intently in one direction. Far away on the

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horizon black streaks of smoke could be counted, — one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten.

It was the enemy's fleet. An officer on the bridge looked at his watch, and said: "An hour and a half more. If things are ready, we can have a good dinner before we get to work."

Another, in the middle of the group, nodded. "They are keeping us waiting, but, friends, make the most of your time." As he said this, he twisted his mustache.

Presently the imperial naval flag was hoisted high on the mainmast, and the sound of the bugle from the bridge was heard all over the ship. Men rushed to their respective quarters, and those who were going to climb to the maintop, to descend to the engine-room, to enter the torpedo-room, or to attend to the sickroom, went to right and left, upon the bridge and toward the stern. In an instant, preparations were complete, and they were ready for action. It was near noon, and luncheon was ordered before the fight.

Takeo had been helping the captain, who was directing the gunners about the starboard quick-firing guns. He, therefore, entered the gun-room a little late, and found his messmates already at the

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table. The short ensign looked earnest, and the mate mopped his forehead as he bent over the plate. Young cadets stole looks at their comrades as they now and then gave orders. Presently one of them rose noisily from his seat. It was the red-shirted ensign.

"Comrades, I love to see that your spirit is dauntless, and that you can sit down to a hearty meal in the face of the enemy. But I doubt very much if we shall all meet at mess this evening. Let us therefore shake hands, and say farewell to one another."

Thereupon he clasped the hand of Takeo, who was next to him, and shook it. At the same time the others all rose and clasped each other's hands, two or three plates being thrown off the table in the commotion. One ensign, with a scar on his left cheek, took the hand of the surgeon.

"When we are wounded, you must handle us gently. This is to bribe you." And he shook the surgeon's hand four or five times.

All laughed, but presently they became serious. One after another they went out, leaving the room with its piles of empty dishes.

At twenty minutes past twelve, Takeo was ordered by the captain of his corps to go up on the

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front bridge to see the vice-commander. From that point of vantage, he saw that the fleet was already disposed in single column: the four cruisers of the First Flying Squadron going first, about four thousand metres apart, the six vessels of the Main Squadron, with the *Matsushima* at the head, coming next, and the *Akagi* and *Saikyo-maru* following them on the left and under cover. The flag on the mainmast was fluttering bravely to the wind, the funnels were sending forth a volume of black smoke, and the white waves at the bow were rising high in foam. The officers on the bridge, some with marine-glasses at their eyes, and some with hands on swords, were breasting the wind.

Away to the north, the ten streaks of smoke, first seen close to the horizon, gradually grew, and the enemy's fleet seemed to be springing out of the water. Masts, funnels, and hulls burst into view, and even the flags at the mastheads were now visible. The two huge ironclads, *Ting-yuen* and *Chen-yuen,* took the centre position; the *King-yuen, Chih-yuen, Wei-yuen,* and *Tsi-yuen* formed the left wing; and the *Lai-yuen, Ching-yuen, Chao-yuen,* and *Yang-wei* the right wing. And to the west four more battle-ships, with six torpedo-boats were seen.

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The Japanese squadrons advanced in single column toward the centre of the enemy, approaching them in like fashion; but, when about ten thousand metres away, the Flying Squadron veered to the left to attack the enemy's right. The rest of the fleet also went to port. The battle lines changed at once from a T to a V shape, and in this position they approached until they were within a distance of six thousand metres. At this moment, white smoke was seen rising at the prow of the *Chen-yuen,* and two 30-centimetre shells shrieked in the air and fell into the sea on the port side of the Flying Squadron. The water of the Yellow Sea rose in clouds.

The Yellow Sea, whose water had been silvery in the moonlight the evening before, and had only this morning reflected in its calm surface the fleecy clouds, the blue islands, and peaceful birds, — the Yellow Sea was now the scene of a dreadful battle.

Takeo returned from the bridge to his quick-firing gun. The captain was busy with his glass, and the gunners had stripped off their jackets and were baring their brown sinewy arms up to the elbow. They all waited silently for orders. At this time, the Flying Squadron, pouring fire into the right wing of the enemy, was about to pass it,

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and the *Matsushima*, at the head of the Main Squadron, was nearing it at full speed. The enemy now formed their battle-line into a wedge, with the *Chen-yuen* and *Ting-yuen* at the apex. As they closed in on each other, the two great battle-ships became clearly visible to the unaided eye. All at once, Takeo remembered them as he had seen them at Yokohama harbor some years before, and he watched them with renewed interest. To be sure, the ships were the same. But, seeing them now as they vomited forth black smoke, churned white waves into fury, belched forth fire from their guns, and approached threateningly, he felt an irrepressible aversion, unmingled with fear, as if they were a terrible beast in his way.

Suddenly a sound as of thunder was heard in the distance, and something boomed through the air close to the mainmast of the *Matsushima*. Falling into the sea, it threw the water some twenty feet into the air. Takeo felt a chill run through his body, but he soon recovered himself. He noticed also that a row of his men wavered a little, but they soon regained their courage. The ship continued on its way. Three, four, five shells burst, one striking a boat on the port side, and the rest deluging the ship with water.

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"Captain, must we hold our fire?" asked Takeo, impatiently. It was a few minutes past one. The order of "four thousand metres" was passed along the starboard line, the angle was adjusted, and the cords were grasped. The long-expected bugle was heard. With the order of "Fire!" the *Matsushima* poured forth a broadside. The vessel shook, and a thick volume of smoke rose along the starboard side. Just then, as if in reply, a huge shell from the enemy grazed the funnel and dropped into the sea. Two or three of the gunners ducked their heads involuntarily.

The captain turned around and said: "Who is it? Who made that bow?"

Takeo, the cadets, and gunners all laughed.

"Fire! Be steady! Fire!"

All the starboard guns were fired in succession. The big 32-centimetre gun also roared, shaking the ship. The vessels behind now joined the fire. Suddenly a shot from the enemy exploded near the gun, and one of the gunners who was carrying a shell fell down behind Takeo. He tried to rise and fell again; the blood gushed forth upon Takeo's uniform. Most of the gunners looked around.

"Who is it?" asked one of them.

"Isn't it Nishiyama? It's he!" said another.

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"Killed?" asked a third.

"Fire!" roared the captain, and the gunners crowded to the gun.

Takeo hurriedly ordered the men to take the corpse away, and turned to his post, when the captain observed his uniform.

"Kawashima, are you wounded?"

"Oh, no. This is only a splash."

"Well, let's avenge the dead."

The guns were fired incessantly, and the ship steamed at full speed. The Main Squadron now swept in a great arc past the right wing to the rear of the enemy. The first encounter being ended, the second was about to begin. The starboard guns of the *Matsushima* were silent for the moment, and the officers and gunners mopped their faces.

The Japanese vessels were thus arrayed. The Flying Squadron, having concentrated its attack on the right wing of the enemy, and having crippled the *Yang-wei* and *Chao-yung,* was about to follow the Main Squadron after circling once, in order to attack the enemy from the rear. The *Hiyei,* fifth vessel of the Main Squadron, delayed by its low speed, was in danger of being rammed, and, wanting to shorten the distance which separated her from the rest, boldly resolved to pass

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through the Chinese line. She succeeded, but was retired from action on account of the severe fire. The *Saikyo-maru* was also out of danger. Only the *Akagi,* a small vessel of 600 tons, was left to face the enemy, and she was desperately fighting her way to join the *Hiyei.* The four vessels of the Flying Squadron and the five of the Main held the line in undisturbed order.

On the enemy's side, the *Chao-yung* was on fire, the *Yang-wei* was disabled, and the right wing was in bad order. The three vessels on the left wing also got out of line in order to pursue the *Hiyei* and *Akagi,* while the torpedo-boats were separated and far off to one side. Several vessels, with the *Chen-yuen* and *Ting-yuen* at the head, turned their prows as they saw the Japanese at their rear, and tried in column to attack the Main Squadron.

The second encounter now began. The *Saikyo-maru* having signalled that the *Akagi* and *Hiyei* were in danger, the fastest vessels of the Flying Squadron were ordered to the rescue. The Main Squadron, however, in a single column described a great arc, with the enemy at its centre, and poured forth its artillery.

At half-past two, they had circled round the enemy's fleet, and had reached the other side. Then

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the Flying Squadron, having driven into the enemy's line, the three vessels that pressed on the *Hiyei* and *Akagi* began to attack from the other side. Thus the Japanese squadrons had the enemy between them. The third and fiercest encounter of the whole battle was about to ensue.

The two fleets, Japanese and Chinese, on which were centred the naval forces of each nation, steamed side by side, and were engaged in deadly battle. Like two monstrous serpents surrounding a huge whale, the water of the Yellow Sea seethed and foamed about them.

The Main Squadron from the right, and the Flying Squadron from the left, pressed on the enemy in opposite directions, and the battle was raging furiously. The fiercer the battle became, the further Takeo forgot himself. He remembered well that he forgot everything at school in the heat of a baseball game, and that he felt as if something from above urged him on. And now he experienced a similar feeling. Except when the ship separated from the enemy's fleet, and again closed in, or when she turned around and faced to port and consequently left the starboard guns unused, Takeo was constantly occupied, and his voice became hoarse at

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giving incessant orders. But he felt nothing. The enemy's shells burst upon the *Matsushima* until her iron shields were split, her wood-work scorched, and her decks smeared with blood. But Takeo felt nothing. The sound of the enemy's guns kept time with the beating of his heart, and a short lull in the conflict even made him uneasy. His men also minded nothing of exploding shells, and loaded the gun, adjusted the angle, pulled the cord, and again loaded with the exactness of target practice and the earnestness of real fighting. A fire was extinguished no sooner than it broke out, shells were supplied without waiting an order, and the dead and wounded were removed in a moment. The whole fighting mechanism operated as quickly and smoothly as possible.

The scene at this moment was confusion itself. The grayish smoke covered the sea and sky, and from among its curling sheets, unexpected flags and masts were dimly visible. The thundering noise rent the skies second by second; the shells sometimes crashed and exploded in the air, and the sea incessantly rose in columns of seething spray.

All at once the captain shouted:

"Look! The *Ting-yuen* is on fire!"

Through a break in the smoke, the prow of the

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enemy's flag-ship, which bore a dragon flag, was seen enveloped in yellow smoke, and her crew, like so many ants, hurried about in confusion.

Takeo and his men cheered.

"Come on; finish her up!"

With increased strength, the guns were fired anew.

Attacked from both sides, the enemy's fleet was now thrown into disorder. The *Chao-yung* had already sunk under fire, and the *Yang-wei* escaped disabled. The *Chih-yuen* was about to sink, the *Ting-yuen* was on fire, and the *Lai-yuen* also caught fire. The fleet could no longer hold together, and, leaving the *Ting-yuen* and *Chen-yuen,* the rest fled in several directions. The Flying Squadron at once started to give them chase, and the Main Squadron directed its fire on the *Ting-yuen* and *Chen-yuen.*

The fourth encounter was imminent.

It was three in the afternoon. The fire on the *Ting-yuen* spread, but she remained there. The *Chen-yuen* bravely stood by her, and the two large massive hills of iron confronted the Japanese vessels. But, as the light-mounted Saracens rode around the Crusaders, and shot in vain on their double-coated armors, so the Japanese shells re-

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bounded from the fourteen-inch armor-belts, and exploded in the air. At about half-past three, the *Matsushima* was opposite the enemy's flag-ship. When Takeo saw that the shots from his quick-firing gun struck her side, rebounded and exploded, like fireworks, to no purpose, he was enraged. Biting his lips and grasping the handle of his sword, he exclaimed:

"Captain, it's damnable! Look — look there! The devil!"

The captain, with bloodshot eyes, stamped about the deck. "Fire! Aim at her deck! Her deck!"

"Fire!" roared Takeo.

The maddened gunners sent their shots furiously to the mark.

"One more!" shouted Takeo, when a terrible noise shook the whole vessel, as if a volcano had burst suddenly upon them. At the same time, something like scattered drops of rain hit him and threw him to the deck.

The two 30-centimetre shells from the enemy had struck the quick-firing gun and exploded.

"God!" ejaculated Takeo, as he sprang up, and then sank to the deck. He felt a terrible pain in the lower half of his body. He looked around as he fell. The place was covered with blood, fire,

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and human flesh. The captain was not there. The gun-shield looked like a cave in which something blue was seen moving. It was the sea.

Oppressed with pain and the indescribable smell, Takeo shut his eyes. He could only hear the agonizing moan of the wounded, the cracking of burning wood, the cries of "Fire! Fire! Ready with pumps!" and at the same time footsteps hurrying toward him.

Suddenly Takeo felt that strong hands were lifting him. As they touched his legs, the intense pain shot up to his brain, and, with a cry, he fell back. A crimson vapor seemed to wreathe before his closed eyes, and in a moment he was insensible.

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Chapter II

In Time of War

BY the middle of October, the First Division had already started for the Regent's Sword from the military headquarters at Hiroshima, but the soldiers of the Second Division soon began to pour into the town. As a special Diet had been summoned, the six hundred members also helped to swell the multitude. The streets everywhere resounded with the clatter of troops, the jingling of swords, and the rolling of kuruma.

Along the main street of the town, pieces of board, with "H. I. H. the Chief of General Staff," "Prime Minister Ito," "Lieutenant-General Kawakami," and similar names on them, were posted to indicate their lodgings. Farther down the street, almost every house was docketed with number and capacity of rooms, and those houses already occupied by soldiers who could not find room in the barracks were marked with the names of officers, number of men, and their company. Here and there new offices of private companies were alive with business, while, in the big stores, the packing

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of provisions was throwing everything into confusion. Through all this disturbance, a general on horseback hastened towards the headquarters; after him a newspaper reporter hurried his kuruma to the telegraph-office; and then somebody from the direction of the railway station, with a valise and a sword wrapped in yellow cloth, crossed the way in company with a man whose face was sunburnt and who was dressed in a worn-out summer suit. The latter appeared to have just landed at Ujina from the seat of war. Directly after them a Minister of State, whose face was familiar to newspaper readers, drove along thoughtfully, making a peculiar contrast with a coolie, who was loitering and humming a tune. The town, however, heard during such a commotion two sorts of music, the war-song of the northern soldiers with a peculiar twang, and the sweet tune of "Hiroshima," sung by gay maidens.

Upon the main street stood a house over whose front a large sign-board, bearing in large characters the words, "Supply Merchants to the Army," was displayed with two or three others. Piles of cheap blankets, heavy coats, and such things filled the space before the house, where some half a dozen men were engaged busily in packing them. Just then

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a middle-aged man, with a somewhat bald forehead and a large red mole under his left eye, came to the door with a visitor. He stopped to say a few words to the clerk who was directing the men, and was about to go in when he observed a kuruma going up the street. Instantly he recognized the man in it and cried:

"Tazaki-san! Tazaki-san!"

The kuruma passed on without paying any attention to the call, but was soon brought back by a lad who hurried after it. The man in it seemed to be past fifty, with a reddish dark complexion and a gray beard. He had on a dark "haori" of common material, and a hat which seemed to have seen long service. He looked somewhat disconcerted at being called back, but immediately recognized the man at the entrance, and asked, in a surprised tone:

"Why, it's Yamaki-san, isn't it?"

"How do you do, Tazaki-san? When did you arrive?"

"I am just going back by the next train." Saying this, Tazaki alighted from his kuruma, and walked to the entrance over the straw and ropes scattered along the way.

"Going back? But where have you been?"

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"To Saseho. I stayed there a few days, and am now on my way home."

"Saseho? Oh, to visit Takeo-san?"

"Yes."

"Indeed," Yamaki went on, "and you pass me by without so much as looking in on me. I am surprised at my daughter and the old baroness, too. They never wrote me a word about you."

"Oh, I've been in a great hurry."

"But, then," continued Yamaki, "it would not have been much trouble just to drop in. Well, come in now at any rate. Send back your kuruma. You must, for I have got to talk with you. You can take the second train back, can't you? How is Takeo-san? I heard he was in the Naval Hospital at Saseho, and I wanted to visit him. But at that time the First Division was going to start, and I was extremely busy, and could only send him a letter of condolence. Oh, was it? The bone was not injured? His thigh, was it? Well, I am very glad to hear he is getting better. His mother will be relieved, I am sure."

Tazaki looked at his watch, and immediately arose. Yamaki stopped him and said:

"Oh, don't hurry so fast. I have something for the baroness, which I wish you to take with you.

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Go back by the night train, won't you? You'll have plenty of time for that. I'll finish my business up, and then we'll go somewhere and have a talk over our saké. The fish here is especially fine."

The evening sun was low on the River Amayasu, and its glow fell on the paper screen of a tea-house by the water. The second floor of the house was now occupied by a noisy crowd from the Diet, assembled for some social purpose, while, in a small room down-stairs, Yamaki and Tazaki were so busily engaged in a quiet talk over their saké that they even compelled the waitress to keep her distance.

Tazaki had been steward to the house of Kawashima from the time of Takeo's father. He still served in that capacity, attending to his duty daily from his house near by. He was not an especially clever fellow, but he scorned to fill his purse with a part of his master's income. And so he was much trusted by the widow and Takeo, and had been sent upon this errand to visit his wounded master at Saseho.

Yamaki put down his cup of saké, and, with his hand on his forehead, said: "The fact is, I stayed in Tokyo only one day, and had to return

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immediately to Hiroshima, and so had no chance to hear the news. Then it seems that Nami-ko-san was very ill? Well, it was a cruel deed. But, at any rate, it had to be done for the good of the house of Kawashima. Oh, is that so? She is better now, and again at Zushi? But you can't tell anything about that disease. It's generally fatal, you know. How about Takeo-san? Is he still angry?"

Tazaki uncovered the bowl of fish soup, from which the smell of mushrooms arose, and took a sip of the tempting liquid as he said: "Well, that is the difficult point. The widow did everything for the good of the house, and that may be easily forgiven. But, Yamaki-san, don't you think she exceeded her mother's right a little in taking advantage of our master's absence, and divorcing her without his consent? Of course I advised her to wait till his return, but you know her temper. She can't wait for anything, if she once sets her heart on it. And so this was the consequence. I rather sympathize with our master in his anger. But I had a great deal of trouble with Chijiwa. I hear that he is now in China?"

Yamaki looked at the face of his companion.

"Chijiwa! Yes, he went over the other day.

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But I had a great deal of trouble with him, too. I had to pay a heavy price for our mere acquaintance. He was bold enough to ask me to give him a parting present, explaining that, in case of his death, it might serve as the customary obituary gift. If he survived, he would come back with the order of the Golden Kite, he said. And in this way he squeezed out of me about a hundred yen. But Takeo-san, — he will go back to Tokyo as soon as he gets well, won't he?"

"Oh, no. He intends to go to war again."

"Well, I admire his pluck, anyway. But, Tazaki-san, don't you think he ought to go home and be reconciled to his mother? I don't know how much he liked Nami-ko-san, but now that the marriage tie is broken, and she is suffering from such a fatal disease, he could not, I think, very well renew the relation. There is really no way but to overlook the past, and heal the breach between them. What do you think, Tazaki-san?"

Tazaki replied rather thoughtfully: "Our master has such a good disposition that, though his mother was wrong, he seems to think that he did not behave right himself. My visit this time, however, was at the wish of the baroness, so there is no need to talk about a reconciliation. But — "

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"It hardly seems the proper thing to talk about an engagement during the war," Yamaki began, "but it seems best for him to take a second wife. How is it, Tazaki-san? Couldn't he forget Nami-ko-san, and at the same time make peace with his mother? A young man is apt to think a great deal of his first love, but, when he meets another, he easily falls into love with her."

"Well, the baroness is thinking of that, too. But —"

"You say it would be difficult?"

"He is so strong-willed, you know."

"But it is for the good of his house and himself, too, you see."

The talk was dropped for a moment. Up-stairs, some one appeared to have finished his speech, for thunders of applause were resounding. The evening light on the screen was softened, and the sound of the trumpets at the barracks seemed far away.

Yamaki dipped his saké cup into a water-basin and passed it to Tazaki.

"Tazaki-san, how about my daughter who is at Kawashima? She is so slow that she might not easily get into the favor of the baroness."

About a month after Nami had been divorced, Yamaki had sent his daughter Toyo to the house

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of Kawashima to be trained by the widow according to his plan. And he was now very anxious to hear about her.

But Tazaki smiled. He must have recalled something funny.

When Takeo left his house in anger, his mother cast a wrathful look as he turned from her, and said:

"You are a disobedient son! Leave me instantly!"

The widow knew that Takeo had always been a good child, and that he had never hesitated to comply with her most exacting demands. And so, though she also knew that he loved Nami greatly, she believed firmly that, in case his love for his wife and his duty to his parents should conflict, he would, of course, prefer the latter. Believing this, — though she really thought the step she was to take was rather too bold, — she dared to divorce Nami, saying that she was doing it for the sake of Takeo and the family. But when she saw the extent of Takeo's anger, she discovered for the first time that she had made a mistake, and that a mother has no absolute power over her son.

Formerly she had looked on her son's love toward

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Nami with a jealous eye, but now, seeing that her love, esteem, and authority could not compete with the love of one dying woman, she felt as if her power were utterly destroyed, and as if she had been cheated out of her prize. Her resentment at Takeo's action was unabated, and she persisted in reviling Nami long after she had left the house.

One thing more added fuel to the flame. She had indeed a slight fear lurking in a corner of her heart that she had been unjust. To her, Takeo's displeasure was absolutely unreasonable, but she began to feel that possibly she had overstepped the rights of a mother. As she lay sleepless by night, watching a wan disk of light, thrown by a lantern on the ceiling, she felt as if a small voice were whispering to her: "You are wrong; you are to blame," and was made very uneasy. Nothing in the world makes us feel so strong as the belief that we are doing right. And nothing is so unpleasant as to be on the point of humbling ourselves under constraint. When injured severely, beasts will roar; when reminded of his guilt, man will rage. Takeo's mother was now in this condition, and her irrepressible anger was even increased by this very feeling. As the days went by, Takeo did not return. Neither did he write

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to tell her that he was in the wrong. As the only way to get rid of her uneasiness, the widow gave full vent to her anger, and was barely able even then to justify herself. She raged at Takeo, at Nami, at the thought of the past and of the future, at her own isolation and loneliness, and ultimately at her own helplessness, till she would finally wear herself out and fall asleep.

At the house of Kawashima, the servants were often tempted to pack up their things on account of the widow's continual ill-temper. At last the news of the battles at Phung Island and Asan stirred the capital. The widow was deeply offended because Takeo had neglected to send her a farewell letter on going to the war, and the accounts of other mothers coming up to Tokyo to see off their sons in the army, or writing to encourage them, made her lamentable situation all the worse. She even thought of the possibility that death might separate them forever. And, being moved somewhat, she reluctantly condescended to write two letters to her son, and to send them to him at the front.

Takeo's answer soon came. About a month later, a telegram reached her from the Naval Hospital at Saseho, telling of his injury. Her hand

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trembled in spite of her, as she held the paper. And, though she learned soon afterward that he was getting better, she sent Tazaki to report on his condition.

The widow felt relieved when Tazaki returned from Saseho, but she earnestly desired to see her son on his recovery, and thought it best to get a second wife for him as soon as the war was over. In that way she hoped to remove Nami from Takeo's mind, to maintain the house of Kawashima, and to make amends, as she thought, for her rather rash act.

To find a good second wife for Takeo was the problem she had had in mind since the very day of Nami's divorce. For that purpose, she canvassed a whole list of young daughters of her few acquaintances, but could not find one who pleased her. While she was at a loss, Yamaki suddenly sent his daughter Toyo to her house to be instructed in good manners. Of course she was soon aware of Yamaki's purpose and of the fact that Toyo was by no means a faultless girl. But a drowning man grasps at a straw. The widow, who was at her wits' end, finally complied with Yamaki's request and received Toyo for trial.

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The result of her examination was the cause of Tazaki's smile. Neither the widow nor Toyo was satisfied, and the servants heard so much that they made merry over the poor girl.

At first calmness, then the sparing use of bird-shot, and finally a terrific bombardment, — such was the stratagem Widow Kawashima employed against everybody. Nami herself had been the object of such an attack. And, as she had been sensitive, she had felt it keenly. Now it was Toyo's turn. Having a happy disposition, which made it possible for her to remain quite indifferent to her surroundings, she did not care for the bird-shot any more than for the spattering of rain-drops. This naturally impelled the widow to take more severe steps.

Toyo was by nature easy-going, as if she were always wrapped in spring haze. Her mind was dull, and, not only had she no ambition, but often she seemed to have no individuality. As she stood in a garden on a spring evening, her body and soul seemed to dissolve into mist and to elude the grasp of hands. Such as she was, since she first awoke to love, Toyo began to learn what she had to pay for it at the house of Kawashima. As soon as she got up in the morning, she would be ordered to do

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this or that kind of work, and, in the end, she would be rewarded only with hard words and taunts. Of course she was generally impervious to light attacks, but even she could not withstand continuous harsh treatment. Had she not been serving in the house of her lover, she would have run away long ago. But, remembering the repeated instructions of her parents, she bravely maintained her stand before the assault, and passed many a cheerless day. At times her situation was almost unbearable, and then she was wont to think what a hard thing love was, and that she would never be in love again. The Widow Kawashima made poor Toyo a safety-valve for her disturbed temper, and the servants made a laughing-stock of her. Without even being able to see the face of her lover, she vainly awaited better days with a patience she had never known before.

With the coming of Toyo, the widow found a new source of displeasure. A gem lost is invaluable; a wife gone is faultless, so the saying goes. Though far from being Nami's equal, Toyo, whose every act caused much trouble to the widow, would remind her mistress regretfully of the one whom she had formerly maltreated. Nami was a modest girl, sparing of words, and gentle in de-

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meanor, not so showy at first glance, but very considerate and clever. The widow, taking advantage of her meekness, had never hesitated to scold her, and yet she secretly admitted that Nami was exceptionally bright for her age. Of her the widow thought, in spite of herself, whenever the comparison was forced on her by the presence of Toyo. Every time something unpleasant happened, when Toyo was near with her vague and indecisive personality, sitting with her eyes half-closed and her lips powerlessly parted, the widow would see before her the pale face and jet-black hair of Nami, who would look up and innocently ask her pleasure. The widow's heart quivered with an odd sense of reproach, and she tried hard to turn her thoughts away by sheer force of the excuse: "It was wrong of her to get ill." Still the strange feeling would increase, — a feeling which she mistook for a fit of her ill-humor, and which thus made her burst out angrily upon poor Toyo.

It therefore happened that at the very moment Yamaki told Tazaki that his aspiration was to make his daughter the second wife of Takeo, the relations between Toyo and the Widow Kawashima had reached a crisis more imminent than even the struggle between Japan and China.

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Chapter III

Convalescence

TAKEO opened his sleepy eyes, awakened by the singing of the birds under his window.

He stretched his arm across the bed and pushed the curtain aside. The morning sun, just rising over the hills, shone brightly through the window. The hills were still veiled in morning mist, but the autumnal sky above was clear, and brought into relief the branches of a cherry-tree standing in crimson attire before the window. Two or three little birds were chirping and hopping on the branches. At last they all peeped into the room, exchanged a look with Takeo, as he half-reclined on the bed, and suddenly flew away, as if taken by surprise, leaving behind them a single yellow leaf falling in the windless air.

Takeo smiled at the thought of the morning messengers who had aroused him from sleep, and, trying to lay his head again on the pillow, he knitted his forehead as if in pain. At last he adjusted himself comfortably, and closed his eyes.

The morning was quiet, and there was nothing to

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disturb him. Presently a cock crowed, and a fisherman's song was heard in the distance.

Takeo opened his eyes, smiled, and again closed them, as if he were deep in thought.

It was now more than a month since he had been wounded in battle, and had been sent to Saseho Hospital.

Hit by fragments of the enemy's shell, which had exploded just within the gun shield, he had fallen insensible to the deck. Luckily the wounds in his leg did not reach the bone, while the remaining injuries were nothing but mere bruises. The captain of his corps had been blown to pieces, and the rest of his fellow officers were all killed, although a few of his gunners escaped unhurt. Under these circumstances, it was indeed miraculous that Takeo did not lose his life. On being sent to the Naval Hospital, he was delirious at first, on account of high fever, but, as he was young, his condition improved with the return of the cool season. After the lapse of over a month, though he still felt some pain, he had recovered sufficiently to attempt to leave the room filled with the smell of carbolic acid, and get out into the open autumnal air, even at the risk of offending the surgeon. He

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was now only waiting for the day when he could go back to the seat of war once more.

The life he had spurned, as if it were as worthless as dust, did not forsake him after all. With the abatement of his fever and pain, the love for life returned in spite of himself, and with it the old care and sorrow. The locust changes its skin, but man cannot do the like, and the thread of Takeo's memory, temporarily buried in the heat of battle and suffering, now returned gradually as he recovered his health and his mind grew calmer.

But, as a severe disease renews our bodily tissues, so the experience Takeo had had in meeting death face to face gave a new color to his feeling. The great battle and the extraordinary events he had met before and after it, shook his mind as if in a storm. The storm was now over, but its effect yet remained in the sea of his heart, and the feeling that floated on it took a different aspect. Takeo was no longer angry at his mother. He enshrined the memory of Nami in the recesses of his heart as if she were no more, and, as his thought turned toward her, he felt as if he were listening to a sad but sweet strain of music wafted from a distant hill.

Tazaki came to visit him, and Takeo heard from

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him about his mother, and also something about Nami. Fearing to displease him, Tazaki did not tell Takeo about Yamaki's daughter. But that something was enough to draw tears from him. There glided into his nightly dream the figure of the sick girl staying alone at a villa where the wind mourned sadly among the pines. And this vision alternated with his dreams of the battle off the Yalu.

Takeo was thinking of what had happened a week ago.

He had thrown away the newspaper he had been reading, and, yawning, looked out of the window. His roommate had gone off the day before, and now he was left alone. It was late in the afternoon. The room was rather dark, and the autumn rain was pouring outside. A patient in the adjoining room must have been under electrical treatment; the humming noise of the instrument blended continually with the rain, and added to the loneliness of the hour. Listening to the noise without effort, he watched the window-panes as the rain splashed upon them like a fountain, and the wet trees and shrubs outside came into view and then vanished. He looked at them dreamily for a while,

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and then suddenly covered his head with the blanket.

"Here are a package and a box for you. Are you asleep?"

Takeo thrust out his head, and saw a boy by the bedstead. He stood there with a paper package and a heavy box tied round with rope.

"Oh, something for me?" asked Takeo. "Where are they from?"

The boy read the name of the sender. Takeo had never heard it.

"Open them for me, please."

The oil-paper being removed, a bundle wrapped in purple cloth was produced. On untying it, there appeared a woollen light dress, a soft silk medium dress, a belt of white crape, a pair of snow-white socks, a broad-sleeved negligée shirt, and a soft shoulder-pad. And what was in the box? It was full of the large pears and fresh bananas of which he was very fond.

Takeo's heart began to throb.

"And no letter in it?" he asked.

The boy looked everywhere, but not a piece of written paper could be found.

"Just let me see that oiled paper."

Takeo looked at his name on the paper, and his

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heart leaped to his mouth. He recognized the handwriting.

It is she. It is she. Who else but she? Do you not see in every stitch of the clothes the precious mark of her tears? Do you not see the writing tremble with the feebleness of her hand?

Hardly waiting to be left alone, Takeo burst into tears.

Takeo now realized that Nami dwelt forever in his soul, and that it was overflowing with endless love. By day he thought of her, and by night he dreamed of her.

But the world was not free, as in his dream. Takeo believed that even death could not sever her from him, much less the trifling conventionalities of the world. But, in trying to materialize his belief, he could only be persuaded that those trifling conventionalities and customs formed an insurmountable barrier between the dream and reality. No matter what the world would do, she was forever his wife. But his mother had divorced her in his name, and her father had recalled the sanction in her stead. There was no more connection between them in the eyes of the world. Would it be possible for him to see her

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again on his recovery, and to try to take her again as his wife? Deceive himself as he might, Takeo was scarcely able to believe that, in spite of a so-called social formality, such things might or could be done. On the contrary, he knew that not only every such trial would fail, but it would widen still further the gap between his mother and himself. He had already tasted enough of bitterness in opposing his mother.

Living in this wide universe, Takeo thought it unbearable to be thus fettered in his freedom of love, but he could not find the way out. From day to day he lived in this uneasiness, and could only console himself by vowing in his heart that Nami was his wife in life or death.

Of this Takeo was thinking as he awoke that morning.

The surgeon came in presently on his regular visit, and went away satisfied that the wound would be healed before long. Then a letter from his mother was brought to him. It expressed her pleasure in hearing from Tazaki of Takeo's improved condition, and went on to say that she wanted him to come back as soon as the doctor would allow, as she had something to talk over with him. Something to talk over! Might it not be the thing he

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most shunned and feared? Takeo pondered. And he did not go back to Tokyo.

Early in November, not long after the *Matsushima,* which had been repaired after the battle in the Yellow Sea, had started again for the war, Takeo left the hospital and sailed on board a transport for his own vessel at Tailienwan.

The day before he started from Saseho, Takeo mailed two letters, one of them to his mother.

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Chapter IV

Temptation

FOR the two months following the first of September, when the place had already been deserted by most of the town people who had thronged there during the summer, a lady might be seen taking a walk in the calm of the day on the sunny beach at Zushi, accompanied by a maid of over fifty.

The fishermen on the shore and the invalids still staying there were accustomed to watch her shadow-like figure, and they bowed to her as often as they met. They all knew something of her sad story.

The young lady was Nami.

Although life held no hope for her, she still lingered on, and time soon brought to her again the weary autumn months.

Nami had returned to Tokyo with her aunt in the previous June, and, from the moment she learned of her unexpected fate, her illness grew worse and worse, and her hemorrhages increased. The doctor could do nothing, her family were sorrow-stricken,

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and she herself cheerfully waited for death. Her life hung by a thread. Being cast by a single blow into the darkness of a deep pit, she had hardly time for any feelings of hatred or love. Oppressed only by the horror of the situation, she merely sought release. And death was indeed the only way. So she longed for it, and while her body lay suffering on the sick-bed, her mind was already in the world beyond. To-day or to-morrow, so soon as this mortal coil should be shuffled off, leaving the weary world far behind, her soul would take flight to heaven through a vast expanse of space, and there she could weep to her heart's content at her dear mother's feet. The messenger of death was never more welcome than now.

But even death was denied her. She thought every day would be her last, but the end did not come. And when about a month had passed, she was somewhat improved in spite of herself, and after another month, she was better. Being compelled to live in this world, Nami had to live over her life of tears. Indeed, she was puzzled at her fate, for she had come to disbelieve in the cheerfulness of life, and to think there was no horror in death. Why should she see the doctor, take medicine and try to save her useless life?

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But there was her father's love. He tenderly visited her from time to time, gave her medicine himself, built a cozy house for her benefit, and tried to restore her health by all means in his power. As often as she heard her father's footsteps and saw his face brighten over her improvement, she could not restrain the tears from gliding down her cheeks. Unable to seek death recklessly, she took care of herself for his sake. And there was another reason. Nami could not doubt her husband. She knew his mind too well to lay the divorce at his door. When she heard from Takeo on her sick-bed, she felt as if a seal was set on her belief, and was much comforted. Of course she did not know anything about her future. She hardly thought that the severed bond of marriage could again be made whole, even though she should get well. But she believed firmly in the emotional intercourse of their spiritual selves, and consoled herself with the idea that nothing could destroy their eternal love.

So the love of her father and her hope in the unchanging love of Takeo, together with the skilful treatment of the doctor, helped to rekindle the fire of her nearly extinguished life. And in the early part of September she again moved with Iku and the nurse to the villa at Zushi.

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Nami felt better at Zushi, and the quietude of the place calmed her mind. When she was reclining in an easy-chair after a bath, on those afternoons while the roll of the sea receded in the distance, and listened soothingly to the sweet notes of the birds, she felt as if she had been carried back to the previous spring, and she almost felt that her husband might appear before her at any moment.

Life at the villa was much the same as it had been six months before. With Iku and the nurse as her companion, she daily attended to herself, and observed the rules prescribed by the doctor. Now and then she would amuse herself in making verses or arranging flowers. Once or twice a week the doctor came from Tokyo to see her. Less often she saw her aunt, or her cousin, or rarely her step-mother. Hearing of her illness, some of her old school friends wrote her letters of condolence, but they lacked sincerity. Nami, however, was impatient for the visit of her cousin Chizu. Everything that she wanted to know came through Chizu.

Since the matrimonial tie had been broken the Kawashima family was further and further removed from her. True, the thought of the beloved one who was hundreds of miles away crossed and re-crossed her mind night and day, but she never

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thought of his mother. Indeed she strove not to do so. If once her thought turned towards her old mother-in-law, she would be disturbed by a bitter feeling of horror and disgust. She was terrified even at the thought of her, and tried to turn away from it. When she heard that Yamaki's daughter had been sent to the house of Kawashima, she naturally felt uneasy. But that was only for a moment. She knew that it had nothing to do with the beloved one in whom she believed firmly. Although she must remain in a small villa on the sandy beach of Sagami Bay, her heart turned constantly toward the western sky.

The two men she loved most in this world were now engaged in the war with China. Her father went down to Hiroshima soon after she went to Zushi, and was going over to the Regent's Sword. She wanted very much to see him off, but he sent word to her that she must take good care of herself, and get well enough to welcome him on his victorious return. Takeo, so she heard, was not on board the flag-ship of the combined squadrons. She feared that if a change in weather affected him, he would be kept from his duty in time of need. Therefore, though she felt sure that she had no more to do with this world, Nami busied herself

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day and night with thoughts of war on land and sea, and pored over newspapers with a heart anxious for the triumph of her country, the safety of her father, and the success of Takeo.

Late in September, she heard the news of the battle off the Yalu, and a few days later she found the name of Takeo among the wounded. Nami did not sleep that night. Her aunt in Tokyo, however, heard about his condition, and informed her that Takeo's wounds were not fatal, and that he was now in the hospital at Saseho. She felt greatly relieved, but as her mind wandered to his sick-bed, she was reminded of the meagre sympathy she was able to bestow upon him. Heart to heart they remained the same, but on account of their divorce she could not even send him a card of condolence. Nami was depressed by these thoughts.

Prompted, however, by an irrepressible desire, she discovered a way. With the help of Iku, Nami made dresses for Takeo, and, together with some fruits she knew he was very fond of, sent them to Saseho under a feigned name, hoping that her sorrowful heart might go with them.

The days passed, and about the middle of November a letter bearing the postmark of Saseho reached Nami. She read it and wept.

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In the morning, Chizu and Nami's sister Koma, who had been with her since Saturday evening, went back to Tokyo. The house, which had resounded with their cheerful voices, now assumed its usual quiet and lonely aspect. And Nami shutting herself up on that gloomy day, sat alone opposite the picture of her dead mother.

To-day, the nineteenth of November, was the date of her mother's last day on earth. Nami took out the picture, hung it in a frame over the wall of the alcove, and decorated it with white chrysanthemums in full bloom, which Chizu had brought. For a while she listened to the cheerful old stories Iku had to tell, but now she was left alone before the picture to indulge in meditation.

It was now ten years since Nami had last seen her mother in this world. And during these long years she never once forgot her. But never before had her heart yearned so much for the departed one. If mother were only alive, Nami thought, she would tell all her grief to her and lighten the burden resting too heavily on her weak shoulders. Why did she go away and leave the helpless child behind? The thought started the silent tears from her eyes.

She remembered well a happy day several months before her mother died. She was eight years old,

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and her sister five; both were dressed exactly alike in pink crape with patterns of cherry flowers, and they drove in a carriage with their mother between them to Suzaki's at Kudan. And this picture now in front of her had been taken then and there. The ten years had passed like a dream, her mother remaining to her memory as in the picture, and she —

She made up her mind never to think of herself, but in the miserable life she now led she could think of nothing else. She felt as if her hopeless self were in the midst of heavy clouds, and as if the room she was now in had turned into a cold dungeon where not a ray of sunlight could find its way.

Suddenly the clock struck two. Awakened from her reverie, she hastened out into the adjoining room as if in flight. There was no one there, and Iku and the nurse was heard talking in the rear. She stood there undecided for a moment, but again stepped out of the room into the garden, and thence though the gate to the beach.

The sky was gloomy. Although it was autumn, the clouds lay low and heavy and the sea frowned black. The atmosphere was calm and not a breath of wind stirred the water. On the whole expanse of the sea not a sail was to be seen.

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Nami went on and on. To-day there were no fishermen, and nobody taking exercise on the beach, except one little girl with a child on her back, singing and gathering shells. The girl saw Nami, smiled and bowed to her, and Nami on her part returned a sad smile. But sinking again into deep thought, she walked on with downcast eyes.

Presently she stopped. She came to where the sandy beach ended, and to where a narrow path over the rocks led to the Fudo Shrine by a waterfall which she had visited with her husband the previous spring.

She walked along that path.

Nami passed by the Fudo Shrine and sat down on a rock. It was the same rock on which she sat last spring with her husband. Then the sky was bright and clear, and the sea was more glossy than a mirror. But now the dark clouds in strange shapes filled the sky, the tide flowed high up to the very foot of the rock, and not a speck of white sail broke the leaden surface of the sea.

Nami drew out the letter. It contained only a few scribbled lines in bold handwriting, but to Nami they appeared far more eloquent than pages of finely phrased sentences. And as often as she read

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the simple confession of Takeo, "Not a day passes without thinking of Nami-san," her heart would thrill as if it would burst.

"Why does the world treat me so?" she asked. "I love him so much, and am almost dying of a broken heart. And he still loves me. And how could it happen that our bond was broken? Isn't his heart's blood in this letter? Here on this very rock we both plighted our faith last spring. The sea knows it and the rock itself marks it. But why was the world so cruel as to crush us under its iron heel? Oh, my dearest husband, here on this rock last spring, last spring —"

Nami opened her eyes. She was sitting alone on the rock. The silent sea lay before her, and only the noise of the waterfall was heard drearily behind. She covered her face with her hands and sobbed. The tears flowed unchecked through her slender fingers.

Her head throbbed, and her heart grew cold, as the thoughts moved through her mind, quick as a shuttle. Nami thought of the days when she was here with her husband, the time she first fell ill, the time she spent at Ikao, and the time she was a bride. The day she went back to Tokyo with her aunt, the day she lost her mother many, many

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years ago, the face of her mother, the face of her father, and the faces of her stepmother, sister, brother, and many others persistently flashed like lightning across her mind. Nami's thought now turned to one of her friends, whom Chizu told about yesterday. She was older than Nami by two years, and had been married the year before her to a certain clever young count. She was much liked by her mother-in-law, but somehow was not loved at all by her husband. She had one child, but on account of the debauched life of her husband she had secured a divorce last spring, and died not long after. On the one hand her friend had died forsaken by her husband, and on the other, Nami led a life of tears, torn from her husband. Varied was the human lot, but all was but sorrow and distress. Nami drew a troubled sigh, and looked at the darkening sea.

The more she thought, the more she felt as if there were no more room for her in this world. Born into a well-to-do family, she had lost her mother at the age of eight, passed ten hard years under the eyes of her stepmother, and no sooner had she been blessed with the crowning joy of human hearts, than she had contracted this horrible disease. And then followed the sentence more

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cruel than that of death, and though the man of her heart remained true to her, she could no longer call him her husband or be called his wife. If she must lead such an ill-fated life, why was she born at all? Why did she not die with her mother? Why was she married to Takeo? Why did she not die in his arms when she first contracted the disease? Why did she not die when she learned of her fate? Was life still worth living to one who was suffering from an incurable disease, and was yearning after an impossible love? Suppose her disease should be cured; she would be sure to die of a broken heart if she could not be restored to her husband. Ah, to die, to die; there was no hope but in death!

Without trying to wipe away her falling tears, Nami looked on the sea.

In the direction of Oshima black clouds were suddenly rising, and an indescribable noise came from a far-off corner of the sky. The face of the wide sea was all at once in a tumult. A gust of wind had risen. No sooner had it passed than a mass of snowy foam appeared suddenly in the midst of the black water, reared itself like a mad horse, and dashed against the rock on which Nami was seated. The vast expanse of the Sagami Sea was

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suddenly turned into seething water, weltering waves chasing one after another.

Without minding the scattering spray, Nami still watched the sea. "Beneath that sea," thought she, "is death. Death may be freer than life. Is it not better to be constantly with my husband in a formless shadow than to linger hopelessly in this life? He is now on the Yellow Sea. Though it is far away, this water flows there. Let me vanish as a foam of the sea, and my spirit fly to him."

Putting Takeo's letter securely in a fold of her belt, and letting her hair fall loose in the wind, Nami rose from her seat.

The wind from the depth of heaven blew steadily by this time, and Nami was barely able to stand. Above, the clouds were chasing hurriedly one after another, and in front of her the sea was tossing in a rage. The wind roared over Sakura Hill, and the pines shook like the mane of a horse. The wind howled, the sea roared, the hill wailed, and a confused thundering noise filled the heaven and earth.

"Now is the time! — Now is the time! Oh, lead me, dear mother! Forgive your daughter, O father! My short life will vanish like a dream."

Drawing her dress about her, and taking off her

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clogs, Nami was about to throw herself into the seething water as it broke against the rock.

Just at this moment she heard a cry behind her, and felt herself in a strong grasp.

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Chapter V

The Yaso's Story

"IKU, make the tea. She will be here soon," said Nami to the old woman, who was cleaning the room.

"She is so nice," said Iku. "But I am surprised to hear that she is Yaso." [1]

"Yes, I hear so."

"I did not even dream that such a nice lady was Yaso. And then, she cuts her hair short, you know."

"What of it?" asked Nami.

"You know that believers in Yaso never cut their hair short when their husbands die. Instead, they dress themselves still more nicely, and are on the lookout for second husbands."

"Who told you so?"

"Oh, I know it," declared Iku. "I tell you, in that religion even young girls grow conceited. I knew a girl living next door to one of my relatives. She had been a very gentle girl, but after

[1] Yaso: from Jesu, meaning in vulgar Japanese either a Christian or Christianity. A rather contemptuous term.

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she went to a mission school, she was changed so much that on Sundays, when her mother needed her help most, she would go to church without the least consideration. And then she would say that she did not like her house because it was not as clean as her school, and she would tell her mother that she was obstinate. Although she went to school, she did not know how to write even a receipt, and she could not sew a single seam straight. Her parents were very anxious over her future. She was so vain as to say that she would not marry a man who got less than two hundred and fifty yen a month. Isn't it really astonishing? She had been such a good child that the change in her was all the more marked. It may be that this was due to some witchcraft that religion is said to exercise."

Nami laughed, and said: "That's bad enough. But every question has two sides to it, and you cannot judge rightly without knowing both. Don't you think so?"

Iku nodded her head, as if to say that she could hardly believe Nami. Looking earnestly at Nami, she continued:

"You had better keep away from Yaso."

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Nami smiled. "You mean that you don't want me to talk with that lady?"

"Why, if all Yaso were like her, there might be no harm, but—"

Iku hesitated, as a human shadow was seen on the paper screen.

"Excuse me if I come in by the garden gate," was heard in a soft voice. Iku arose hurriedly, opened the screen, and a rather small woman of about fifty entered. She looked old for her age, her gray hair was cut short, and she was dressed in black. Lean and careworn, she appeared rather sad, but her eyes looked kind and her lips were smiling.

She was the very person Iku had been talking about. And, besides, she was the very person who had rescued Nami from drowning the week before.

She never made the slightest attempt to force herself upon the attention of others, but those who knew her bore strong testimony to her remarkable personality. Her name was Kiyo Ogawa, and she lived at Meguro in charge of a large family of orphans, taking delight in looking after the little souls of deserted children. She had been at Zushi since the end of the last month, seeking recovery

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from an attack of pleurisy. It was by the merest chance that she happened to be able to save Nami, whom she gave at once into Iku's care.

Iku had brought in the tea and was just about to leave the room, when she exclaimed in a surprised tone:

"Are you going back to-morrow? What a pity! We have just got acquainted with you."

The old lady, looking at Nami with her mild eyes, answered:

"I wish I could stay a little longer, and have the opportunity to talk with you, for I do not want to go back until you are better." Taking out a small book, she added: "This is the Bible. You haven't read it, I suppose."

Nami had not read it. Her stepmother had been known as a Christian while in England, but upon her return she had renounced her faith, and had left her Bible at her lodging in London, together with her old shoes and papers.

"No, I haven't read it," Nami replied.

Iku, unable to go, stared with open eyes at the book. She was probably thinking that there was witchcraft in it.

"If you read it," the old lady continued, "when

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you feel well, I am sure you will be much benefited. If I could stay a little longer, I would take time to talk with you about many things in it. But, as this is my last day, I wanted to tell you how I came to read this book. Don't you feel tired? Please lie down, if you prefer."

"Thank you, but I am not tired," said Nami. "Please tell me your story."

Iku now changed the tea, and went away.

The old lady looked down for a moment, felt of her knees, and then, gazing up into Nami's face, began her story.

"Life is short, but if you consider the amount of experience you can have, it is indeed very long. My father was a lord under the last Shogun, and was quite well off. Perhaps you remember the little piece of ground with a great many elm-trees growing on it, just beyond Sui-do Bridge at Koishikawa. Of course it went into another's possession long, long ago, but I was born in a house there. Mother died when I was twelve years old. Father was very sad over his loss, and he did not take a second wife. So, young as I was, I had to look after all the household matters. My brother was married, and I was soon given away in marriage to a certain Ogawa, also a general, but a little

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higher in rank. It was when I was twenty-one, some ten years before you were born, I suppose.

"I was disciplined in our code of morals for young women, and thought that I was never behind anybody in matters of self-sacrifice. But when I came to deal with real things I found them often simply unbearable. It was just before the Restoration, my husband could rarely be at home, and as I had parents-in-law and two sisters-in-law, I had five elders in the family to serve. I cannot tell you how much I was worried. My father-in-law was a good-natured man, but my mother-in-law was very hard to please. My husband had had a wife before me, so I understood, but she was frightened away not long after she came. I don't like to speak ill of any one in the grave, but my mother-in-law was really a violent and strong-headed woman, and, in spite of my efforts to deny myself, I sometimes shed many secret tears. To make things still worse, they often discovered that I wept, and I was scolded over and over again.

"It was, however, not long before the Restoration War broke out, and the city of Yedo was all in commotion. My husband, father, and brother all joined the Anti-Restoration Volunteers at Ueno. My father-in-law was dangerously ill, and my child

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was about to be born. Indeed, I did not know what to do under the circumstances. At last, Ueno was stormed, my husband fled northward to Hakodate, my father disappeared, my brother died at Ueno, and his family were also lost. In the meanwhile, my father-in-law died and my child was born. Everything came at once. I was almost overwhelmed with trouble. And then, as our annuity from the Shogun ceased and our property was confiscated, my mother-in-law, with the baby and myself, accompanied by an old servant, started on a journey to Shizuoka, the old town of the Tokugawas, over the Hakone hills. I felt as if I were struggling under the weight of a horrible dream."

At this time the nurse came in, made a bow, and, after giving medicine to Nami, left the room. The old lady closed her eyes for a while. At last she looked at Nami, and continued:

"The distress of the vassals of Tokugawa House at Shizuoka was simply indescribable. The Shogun was so reduced in power and in income that even Count Katsu was then obliged to live in retirement. The rations for three men allotted us in place of the annuity of ten thousand bushels of rice we had hitherto received was considered very liberal. I am almost ashamed to tell you that we could hardly

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afford to buy more than half a loaf of bean-cake at a time. My mother-in-law had been used to luxurious living, so I was very much troubled about her. I did what I could to help my family by giving sewing and writing lessons to little girls, and by making dresses for other people. I did not mind it much, but my mother-in-law, being still in a violent temper, my husband then in prison, and the whereabouts of my father still undiscovered, I was so much distressed that I would willingly have died but for my little child. Indeed, I was so worn with care that by the end of the year I looked ten years older.

"After a while, however, my husband was released, and entered the army. So again we crossed the Hakone hills and returned to Tokyo — the name had already been changed, you know. It was the spring of 1871. A year after, my husband was sent abroad. We fared very well, except for the unchanging temper of my mother-in-law. And then there was one thing that constantly troubled me, and that was the whereabouts of my father.

"In the fall of the year my husband sailed for Europe. One rainy day I went to see a certain acquaintance of mine at Koishikawa, and came home in a kuruma they hired for me. It was already

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dark and was storming outside. I sat timidly in the kuruma, while the man drew it lazily along. I could see him with his round projecting head-gear and the wrinkled oil-paper coat from which the rain dripped. The light of the lantern he held in his hand glided over the muddy road, and his splashing footsteps were heard mingled with the occasional groans he uttered. Just as we came to Sui-do Bridge, the lantern went out. The man stopped his kuruma, and asked to be allowed to take a box of matches from under the cushion. I could not hear him very well on account of the wind, but his voice seemed familiar, and, as the light he struck showed me his face, I saw before me my own father!"

The old lady covered her face involuntarily, Nami burst into tears, and some one in the adjoining room was also heard sobbing.

Wiping her eyes, the old lady went on:

"I took him to a lunch-house near by at once, and there he told me his story. He said that after the fall of Ueno he had wandered around the country, earning his living in several ways. At times he had been sick, and always poor. He was now staying at the house of a poor gardener, who

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had been one of our retainers in his better days, and he gained his livelihood by drawing kuruma every day. Feelings of surprise, joy, alarm, and sadness swept over me by turns, and I could say little. That evening, however, we parted, my father suggesting to me the recklessness of staying out too late.

"It was quite late when I got home. My mother-in-law had been impatient for my return, and she no sooner saw me than she burst out in all her fury. She even called me a disreputable name. Suppressing my emotion, I told her about my father. Far from sympathizing with me, she still continued to call me disreputable names. I was so much hurt that I made up my mind to leave the house, and go at once to my father. After she had gone to bed, I changed my clothes and began to write a note to my mother-in-law at the bedside of my boy, who was then six years old. He cried out all at once in sleep, and, stretching his right hand towards me, muttered: 'Mamma, don't go away!' He must have been dreaming over the experiences of the day, as I had left him at home in going to Koishikawa. I was surprised, and watched for a while the face of the sleeping child, when it gradually turned out to be a very copy of my

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husband's face. I dropped my writing-brush and wept. I don't know how it happened, but suddenly I was reminded of the old story of a bride and her mother-in-law I used to hear in my childhood from my mother, and it fitted my case exactly. I thought that everything would be all right only through my forbearance, and so I gave up my first idea. I am not wearying you?"

Nami, who had been listening with deep interest, could only give assent with her tearful eyes. The old lady now resumed her story.

"Such being the case, I could not provide for my father as I wanted to. And so very secretly I sold my spare things and sent him a little money, but of course that could not last long. Luckily, however, I was introduced to a certain foreign minister's wife who desired to learn Japanese music, and so I gave her lessons, and thus was able to support my father. The foreign lady was very kind to me, and we were soon good friends. She would talk with me in her broken Japanese, and one day she gave me a book and wanted me to read it. It was the Gospel of Matthew, — you will find it at the beginning of this Bible, — which at that time had just been translated into Japanese. I tried to read it, but, as it was full of strange

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stories, I laid it aside without paying further attention to it.

"Early in the following year my mother-in-law was stricken suddenly with paralysis, and this brought a complete change in her temper. Hard-hearted as she had been, she now became meek as a child, and wanted my company so much that she would call me back every time I left her side. As I watched her sleeping there helpless, I was sorry that I had ever felt revengeful towards her, and, wanting to make her well, if possible, I did what I could for her. But all to no purpose.

"Not long after my mother-in-law died, my husband came home. My father was to join us pretty soon, but he suddenly fell ill, and died peacefully a few days after. He told me that no one was more fortunate than he in meeting his lost daughter, and in receiving such tender treatment from her. But I was sorry that I could not do for him one-tenth of what I had intended to do.

"Things went along very well thereafter, my husband being promoted gradually and my son growing up well. But I was not without anxiety. My husband was too much given to drink, as often is the case with army officers. And then, in those days, men were especially loose, and, though my

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husband was better than the average, having profited by Western manners, he was in many ways no exception to the general rule. Being humiliated by his dissipation, I often took occasion to give him some advice, but he only laughed at my words.

"We had now come to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1876, and my husband, being Major Captain of the Imperial Guard, was sent south. In his absence my boy became ill with scarlet fever, and I had to nurse him day and night. It was the evening of the eighteenth of April. My boy was somewhat better, and was sleeping quietly, so, dismissing the maids, I sat alone by his bedside and was doing a bit of needlework. I gradually became very drowsy and felt almost soulless, when I heard some one come and sit on the bed. I wondered who it was, and looked up. It was my husband, dressed in his uniform, covered with blood and deadly pale! I cried — and, awakened by my voice, I looked around me, but no one was there. The light of the paper lantern burned dim and my boy was sleeping still. My heart palpitated and cold sweat stood on my brow.

"The day following, my boy was very much worse, and died in the evening. I was overcome with sorrow, and was crying with him in my arms, when

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a telegram reached me from the seat of war. It announced the death of my husband in battle."

The speaker was silent, the listener held her breath, and a deep quiet fell upon the room. After awhile the old lady took up the thread of her story again.

"Everything was now as dark as if the sun and moon had both sunk together. If this was the result of all my patience, I thought, I felt that I would rather die without recovering, for I had fallen ill soon after that. But, luckily or not, I recovered slowly.

"The world was now empty to me, and I merely breathed in it. After a while, however, I was persuaded to dispose of my house and to live with a certain friend of mine. With that in view, I was busy packing my things, when I happened to find a book under my son's dress in a cabinet. It was the Bible the foreign minister's wife had given me years ago. I opened and looked at it without intending so much as to read it, when I came across a little phrase which strangely appealed to me. I marked it, and it was that which induced me to look more into the book now and then. I could not understand it very well at first, but I soon felt as if I saw a gleam of light somewhere.

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My foreign friend had already gone, but I wanted to get some one to explain to me fully about the book.

"Not long after, I was offered a position as matron in a girls' school. It happened to be a Christian institution, and I soon made friends with a young man and his wife who were teaching there. They were very good Christians and they kindly made everything clear to me. It is now sixteen years since I began to believe in the new faith, and I have hardly been able to pass a day without the book. It is the very staff of my life. The world which I thought ended with death widened in my knowledge of immortality; my father was given back in our Heavenly Father; my son was returned to me through the working of love; and all my sufferings are sweetened in the belief in hope.

"This is briefly how I came to read this book," she said, watching Nami's face for a few moments.

"I knew," she added, "something of your story, and, as I saw you often on the beach, I wanted very much to visit you. And now that I have grown to know you, I feel very sorry to leave you so soon. But I shall never think of you as a mere acquaintance; something deeper than that seems to exist between us. I wish you would take good

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care of yourself, and never think of life as too sad to live. And, when you feel well, just read this book. I go back to Tokyo, but I am thinking of you day and night."

The old lady left for Tokyo the next day. The book she had given Nami was always by her bedside.

Nami felt consolation in thinking that there was somebody in this wide world, not her mother or aunt, but one who, herself having tasted of the bitterness of life, took delight in comforting and sympathizing with her. She often thought of her story, and turned over the book she so sincerely loved.

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Chapter VI

Port Arthur

ON the twenty-second of November the Second Army captured Port Arthur.

"Mother! Mother!"

Holding a newspaper in her hand, Chizu called to her mother in a startled tone.

"What is the matter? You ought not to speak so loud."

Chizu blushed a little at being reprimanded by her mother. Then she smiled, but again she became grave, and said:

"Mother, he is dead — Chijiwa!"

"Chijiwa!" exclaimed Madam Kato. "Chijiwa! How? Killed in battle?"

"Yes. His name is among the killed. Good enough for him!"

"You must not say such things — Chijiwa died in battle! But how could he be so brave?"

"It was better for him to die," observed Chizu.

Madam Kato was silent.

"Isn't it sad to have no one to weep for us after we die, Chizu-san?"

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"But the Widow Kawashima will weep for him," Chizu remarked, sarcastically. "Talking of Kawashima, mother, O-Toyo-san has left the house at last."

"Are you sure?" Her mother was surprised.

"Yes. Yesterday she had further trouble with the widow. She could stand it no longer, and returned home weeping, I hear. I am glad she has left there."

"No one can stay there long, I presume."

Madam Kato sighed, and Chizu was silent.

Chijiwa was dead. Twenty days after the foregoing conversation, a letter and a piece of human bone reached the cheerless house of Kawashima. The bone was Chijiwa's, and the letter was from Takeo.

"Two days after the capture of Port Arthur," he said, "all the vessels and the dockyards were to be placed in charge of the navy, and I landed with some other officers from my vessel for that purpose. The bloody scenes after the fierce battle were beyond description — I happened to pass in front of a temporary field-hospital, when I saw men carrying a corpse on a litter. It was covered with a blue blanket, a piece of white cloth being placed over the

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face. The mouth and chin seen under the cover seemed to remind me of somebody I knew, and I asked the name. You may well imagine my astonishment when I was told that it was Lieutenant Chijiwa!

"I uncovered him, and saw his face pale and his teeth clinched. He had been badly wounded by bullets at the attack of Itzushan fortress, and was conscious till morning, but he died at last. I asked some of his fellow officers about him. They said that he was not liked at all in his company, but that he fought well in the battle, and that at the attack of Chin-Chow he and his men were the first to break through the Northern Gate. But he was often unsoldierly in his behavior, and had with him a considerable sum of money. Once at Pi-tzu-wo he acted very cruelly toward some of the natives, trying to rob them in spite of strict orders, and he was to be punished for that. At any rate, his death on the battle-field is said to have redeemed his reputation.

"As you know, he caused me a great deal of trouble, and I had given up all intercourse with him, but have nothing against his memory. And when I think of the days we passed like brothers, I pity him very much. So I got permission to

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cremate his body, and send you a piece of his bone with this. I hope you will inter it properly."

This, however, was not all that Takeo came across at Port Arthur. There was one more incident which he purposely omitted to mention in his letter.

The day he discovered Chijiwa's corpse, Takeo was delayed in going back toward the pier. The sun had set.

He passed by sentinels with gleaming bayonets, generals riding on horseback, petty officers receiving orders from their superiors, Chinamen standing open-mouthed, and army subordinates going to and fro. And finally he came to where some coolies were making a big fire.

"It's cold!" said one of them. "If we were home we should have a drink and a hot dish of stewed fish. Kichi, that's a fine thing you have on!"

Kichi was wearing a beautiful quilted coat of purple satin, which he had probably confiscated.

"Say, look at Gen," Kichi said, in reply. "He has a fur coat on worth four hundred yen!"

"Happy Gen!" the first one echoed. "No one is as lucky as he. He never loses his game, is never hit by a bullet, and is rewarded for doing

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nothing. Look at me. Nothing but this thin thing. Damn it! I lost everything at Tailienwan. I must get something before long."

"Be careful," observed another. "I entered a house this afternoon, when suddenly a pig-tailed soldier jumped out from behind a box with a drawn sword. He thought I was going to murder him, but, as a matter of fact, I was almost frightened to death. Luckily our soldiers came along and soon made short work of him. If not, I should have been sent to hell right away."

"Fools! Why do they still remain here to be butchered?"

Only a day or two had passed since the fall of Port Arthur, and not a few fugitive Chinese soldiers, who had hidden themselves in houses, were killed for offering resistance.

Overhearing the talk of the common soldiers, Takeo went along toward the pier. The lights were now few, and men were rarely seen. On one side the long wall of the arsenal threw a dark shadow on the ground, and on the other, a street lamp cast a dim, uncertain light upon a lean dog as he went along smelling the earth.

As Takeo walked in the shadow, he descried two human figures about fifty yards ahead. He was

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sure that they were officers. One was broad-shouldered, and the other was slim in build. As they walked along they were talking.

Suddenly Takeo noticed some one stealthily tracking them. He felt his heart throb strangely. He could not see clearly, but suddenly the man in the shadow went a step, hesitated, took another step, and looked as if awaiting his opportunity. The figure now came to a lighted space between houses, disclosing itself to be a Chinese. At the same time something glittered in his hand. Takeo hastened after him excitedly.

The two men ahead now came to the end of the street, when the black figure in the shade stepped boldly out of the dark and ran toward them. Alarmed, Takeo dashed forward. The Chinese, however, approached within ten yards of the men, raised his arm, and brought the slim officer to the earth with a shot. He was about to pull the trigger upon the other officer, who turned around suddenly, just as Takeo reached the spot and gave a hard blow on the right arm of the murderer. The pistol dropped to the ground. Infuriated, the man turned on him and the two fought. The broad-shouldered officer came to his aid, and a band of Japanese soldiers, attracted by the noise of the

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shot, came running to the spot and immediately bound the assassin. Takeo was breathless after the struggle, and stood gazing at the broad-shouldered officer who now turned towards him.

The light of a street-lamp shone in the face of Lieutenant-General Kataoka.

Takeo exclaimed: "You!"

"You!" The general in his turn was surprised.

Unexpectedly Takeo had saved the life of Nami's father.

When the news reached Nami's ears, Iku rejoiced beyond measure, and said: "You see how much we owe him. Do try hard to get well."

Nami smiled gloomily.

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Chapter VII

Takeo's Return

THE year began and ended in war.

In the first two months, Wei-hai-wei was captured, and the Peiyang Squadron was annihilated; in March the Pescadores fell into the Japanese power, and in the north the Imperial Army swept like a tide until not a shadow of the enemy was to be seen to the east of the River Liao. The Peace Embassy came to Japan, and in the middle of April the Peace Treaty was awaiting the signatures. The intervention of the three Powers was rumored, and the Liatung Peninsula was finally restored. By the end of May his Imperial Majesty, commander-in-chief of the army and navy, returned triumphantly to the capital, and the war was ended with the impressiveness of an eagle gathering its wings for flight.

After burying the ashes of Chijiwa at Port Arthur, and saving the life of General Kataoka, Takeo was at the bombardment of Wei-hai-wei, and also at the occupation of the Pescadores. At the

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beginning of June, however, his vessel reached Yokosura, and he returned home.

It was over a year since he had left his mother in anger. So many thrilling incidents had been crowded into that period, however, that his hard feelings were softened, and on rainy days at the Saseho Hospital, or on the bitter cold nights at Wei-hai-wei, his homeless heart would turn to its old abode in Tokyo.

Takeo did not notice any change at home except the face of a maid who met him at the door. His mother was as large as ever, and was confined to her bed with rheumatism. Tazaki came daily, and, in his little office, attended to the household business as usual. Everything Takeo saw or heard remained just the same. And Takeo could not find anything to enliven his spirits. Although he had seen his mother again after a long absence, had taken a comfortable bath in his old home, had sat on a thick, downy cushion, had eaten his favorite dishes, and had laid his head on a soft pillow in a comfortable bed, he could not go to sleep. The clock struck one, — two, — yet his eyes were clear and his heart was heavy.

A year's time had healed the breach between mother and son; at least, it seemed to have done

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so. The mother, of course, welcomed her son home, and Takeo also felt relieved at seeing her. But both perceived, even at their first meeting, that they had nothing in common. He did not ask her anything about Nami, nor did she speak of her, — not because he did not wish to ask or she did not know, but because they both knew that danger lurked in that topic. And, as they noticed that each was careful to avoid it, they naturally felt uneasy whenever the conversation came to a halt.

Takeo, however, needed no incentive to keep Nami constantly in his mind. Now that he had returned to their old abode, everything seemed to keep her alive in his memory, and his heart yearned for her. Where was she now? Did she know of his return? Love, indeed, knows no distance, but now that the bond was broken, the house of Kataoka, though only two miles away, was to Takeo further than the stars. He could not visit even her aunt to ask about Nami. Little did he know, when he stopped at Zushi to take his leave of her in May of the previous year, that it was to be their parting for life. The cry, "Come back soon," which she uttered at the gate of the villa, still rang in his ears, but to whom could he now say, "I have returned"?

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Turning these thoughts over in his mind, Takeo alighted one day at Zushi on his way to Yokosura, and wandered towards the villa. He found the front gate closed. Thinking that the occupant must have gone to Tokyo, he went around to the back of the house, where he saw the old servant weeding alone in the garden.

The old man looked around at the sound of footsteps, and, recognizing his visitor, took off his head-cloth as if surprised, and bowed courteously, saying:

"Good morning, sir. When did you come back?"

"A few days ago," answered Takeo. "You are always well, Mohei?"

"Yes, sir, thank you," said the old man.

"You are staying here alone?" Takeo asked.

"Why, the Baroness — Miss — my sick lady was here with Iku till the end of last month. Since then I have kept the house alone."

"Returned last month? Then she is now in Tokyo," muttered Takeo to himself.

"She went back to Tokyo," the old man went on, "before my lord returned from China. Yes, and then she went to Kyoto with my lord, but I suppose she is not yet back."

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"To Kyoto? Then she must be better," murmured Takeo to himself. "And when did she go to Kyoto?"

"About a week ago—" The old man reflected suddenly on the present situation, and stopped short, fearing that he was telling too much. Takeo understood what was passing in the mind of the old servant, and flushed.

They stood there for a while without words. The old man, however, felt sorry for him, and said, as if recollecting himself:

"I will open the doors. Perhaps you will step in and take some tea."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself," said Takeo. "I just looked in on my way back to Yokosura."

Takeo turned to look around the familiar garden. As there was a keeper, things did not look wild, but the doors were all shut and the water in the basin was gone. The leaves were dense, and yellow plums were falling and were scattered on the ground. On the lawn the late roses were half-withered, filling the garden with their faint fragrance. No human trace was to be found, and the jarring cry of the locusts on a pine-tree was the only sound that met the ear.

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Takeo soon parted with the old man, and went away thoughtfully.

A few days later he was again ordered to leave for the south. He passed two weeks at home, but not in the customary celebrations over a victorious return. His home had seemed to him the best place on earth while he was away from it, but, try as he might, it could not fill the gap in his heart.

His mother understood his feelings, and her displeasure gave voice to itself in words. Takeo also observed that his mother could read his mind, and, whenever they were talking, he always felt as if there were a wall between them.

He was to sail from Yokosura, but he missed his train thence. Thereupon he determined to catch his ship at Kure, and on the tenth of June he left by the Tokai-do train, lonely.

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Chapter VIII

Passing Trains

THREE people were coming out of t kusan Temples at Uji: a portly ge of over fifty, in foreign dress and with capped cane, a lady of about twenty, car black parasol, and an elderly appearing ma a small bag.

As soon as they emerged, the three kuru waiting at the gate brought them their The old gentleman looked at the lady, and

"Fine weather. What do you say to w little bit?"

"All right."

"Won't you get tired?" the maid aske lady.

"No. I'd rather walk a little way," t replied.

"Then we will go slowly, and take the when we get tired."

The three walked along leisurely, follo the three kuruma. The party was, of cours eral Kataoka, Nami, and Iku. They had

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yesterday from Nara, and were now going toward Yamashima Station on their way to Otsu.

The general had returned from the Regent's Sword the last of May. One day he saw Nami's doctor privately, and two days after, taking his daughter and the maid Iku, went down to Kyoto. Selecting a quiet hotel by the river as his head-quarters, he spent several days in sightseeing with Nami at her pleasure, clad in private dress instead of uniform, avoiding his friends, and refusing all invitations to public meetings. The world lost sight of the general for a while, and Nami alone possessed her father.

"Stepping out of Obak' —[1]
Lo, Jap'nese tea-picking!"

The best season for tea-picking had already passed, but the wind brought now and then the fragrance of drying tea, and a few country girls were seen starting a second picking. Here and there among the tea-fields, the fields of wheat were also turning yellow, and the rustling sound of sickles was heard. The distant hills of Yamato were veiled in a soft

[1] Obaku: the name given to the temples after the famous Chinese temples of the same name. Uji, where the temples are, is a noted tea producing district. Hence the contrast.

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summer mist, while the river Uji betrayed itself by the white sails gliding over the wheat-fields far away. From a low-roofed village near by, the noontide crowing was wafted peacefully, and in the sky overhead a lavender cloud remained motionless.

Nami gave a sigh.

Presently from a path on the left a farmer and his wife appeared talking. They were returning to their work after lunch. The man had a sickle in his belt, and the woman was made noticeable by her blackened teeth and by her head-covering of a piece of white cloth. She carried a large teapot in her hand. She stopped short as she met the party, looked at them for a while, and, catching up with the man, whispered something to him. Both looked back, the woman smiling and showing her beautifully colored teeth. Still talking, they passed along into a field path where the thistles bloomed wild.

Nami's eyes followed them. The large round straw head-gear and the white cloth sank gradually into the yellow of the wheat-field, and finally disappeared. From that direction a voice came, singing:

"Yours, a Mas'muné make,
But mine, a rusted sword:
Though you may sever,
I never."

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Nami looked upon the ground with sorrowful eyes.

The general turned towards her. "You must be tired," he said, and took her hand in his.

The general talked to Nami as they walked along.

"Time passes very fast. Nami, do you still remember that, when you were a little girl, you used to kick my sides as I carried you on my back? It was when you were only five or six years old, I am sure."

"I remember," chimed in Iku, lightly. "When my lord took you on his back, the young miss wanted to be carried too. At this time she is also wishing very much to be with us, I am sure."

Nami only smiled gloomily.

"Koma!" said the general. "We are going to take her plenty of souvenirs instead. But, Nami, Chizu-san wanted to come more than Koma, didn't she?"

"I believe so," Iku spoke again. "If she could be with us, we should be so merry. I wanted to ask my lord some questions. Is that river we just crossed the Uji? Then it is noted for fire-worms? And it is where Komazawa met his lady-love Miyuki?"

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"Why, Iku, you are quite a scholar, aren't you?" the general asked, smilingly. "Well, the world changes rapidly. When I was young, the travelling from Osaka to Kyoto was always done in a junk, passengers being packed into it as in a box. Now I had an even more interesting experience when I was twenty years old. Immediately after Saigo and Kayeda took Priest Gesshô to Osaka, an important matter arose, and I had to go after them. But I started so hastily that I left all my money behind. And, there being no help, I ran barefooted all the way through to Osaka — it was night, you know — along the river bank," and he laughed. "Isn't it warm? Nami, you mustn't walk too much. We must ride now."

Iku beckoned the kuruma-men, who were lagging behind. Then the three rode along slowly through the tea and wheat fields towards Yamashima.

Looking at the gray hair of her father as he passed before her, Nami thought deeply. Was this trip with her father happy or sad? She was unfortunate in being deprived of all hope and pleasure in this world, and in having to wait for not remote death, but it was easy to feel that her father's heart yearned for her. She thought of his boundless love towards her, and she was troubled because she

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could find no way to return it. The most she could do was to return in spirit to her bygone childhood, and to share it with her father away from worldly care. So she sought novel sights with the eagerness of a child. When she bought pieces of silk at Kyoto, she knew they would be of no use to her, but she selected especially showy ones, so that her sister might have them as a keepsake.

Although she felt deeply for her father, she never forgot Takeo. The bare report that he had saved her father's life at Port Arthur was the only news that reached her about him. Her thoughts wandered everywhere, and her dreams brought him to her, but she did not know where he was. She wanted to meet him, to meet him once, only once in her lifetime, but, alas! The touching song she had just heard rang in her ears at this thought, and the figures of the farmer and his young wife talking happily floated before her eyes. Ah, they were blessed in their rags, she thought, but she in her soft silk —

Tears came to her eyes. She tried so hard to check the emotion that the only result was a severe coughing spell.

The general looked back anxiously.

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"It is all right now," she said, smiling in spite of her pain.

At Yamashima they took an east-bound train. They were alone in a first-class compartment, and Nami sat by an open window, with her father in front of her, looking at a paper.

Presently a Kobe train came rolling in from the east, and stopped alongside their train. As the noise of the slamming doors and the voice of a porter calling "Yamashima, Yamashima!" were heard on the other side, the engine of their train whistled, and the train began to move slowly. Nami was looking at the opposite train from the window. As she came in front of a second-class car, her eyes met those of a young man resting his cheek on his arm.

"Ah!" Nami could scarcely speak.

"Oh, Nami-san!" cried the young man.

It was Takeo.

The train was passing. She madly thrust herself out of the window, and tossed her violet-colored handkerchief to him.

"Look out, miss." Alarmed, Iku held Nami's sleeve.

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The general also looked out of the window with paper in hand.

The trains drew slowly away from each other. Nami thrust herself still farther out of the window, and saw Takeo waving the handkerchief wildly and saying something. Suddenly the train curved around a hill. On both sides there was now nothing but leafy slopes. A sound was heard behind as of tearing linen; the other train had just steamed off to the west.

Nami covered her face and bent over the knees of her father.

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Chapter IX

Sayonara

ON the evening of the seventh of July a good many people were assembled at the house of General Kataoka. They talked in subdued tones, for his daughter Nami was dying.

When the general and Nami came back unexpectedly at the end of last month from their trip to the old capital, those who received them at the porch saw at once that she was much worse. Naturally, the doctor was surprised. He found that not only had her health failed considerably in a short time, but that there was an alarming change in her heart. From that time on, even at midnight, a light was kept burning at the house of Kataoka, and the doctors came and went almost incessantly. Madam Kataoka was to go to a summer resort, but she had to give up her plan for a time.

In spite of the skilful treatment of the doctors, and the tearful prayers of Iku by day and by night she grew worse and worse. She had several hemorrhages and convulsions of the heart. After

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a severe attack, she would remain half-asleep and talking to herself. She was growing weaker and weaker. Whenever her father was awakened by hearing her cough, and came in to see her, Nami would smile faintly and speak clearly in spite of her short breath. In her semiconscious condition she muttered the name of Takeo constantly.

The day the doctor dreaded was coming to an end. The rooms were all lighted. But, as no one dared to speak aloud, all was silent as the grave. Two ladies came out of the sickroom in order to leave the patient undisturbed. One was Madam Kato and the other was the old lady who had once saved Nami at Zushi. She had not seen Nami since the last fall, but had now been sent for by her special desire.

"I thank you very much for your kindness to her. She wanted to see you once more. And I am sure she is very glad that you came." Madam Kato could barely speak.

The old lady only sighed, and scarcely knew what to say. Presently she asked, in a low voice:

"And where is he now?"

"He is in Formosa, I hear."

"Formosa!"

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The old lady heaved another sigh.

Madam Kato was barely able to check he
as she said:

"If he is not too far away, as she is
thinking of him, we will summon him b
means, so that she may take leave of him
I fear that he has already reached there, a
sides, he is on board a war-vessel — "

At this moment Madam Kataoka came i
lowed by Chizu, who hurriedly spoke to her r

A large room was dimly lighted with candl
Nami was lying on a snow-white bed wi
eyes closed.

She had now been ill for almost two yea
was worn to a shadow. Her pallid face was
transparent, but her black hair was as gl
ever. At her bedside a nurse was sitting ar
ting her lips with cooled wine, while Iku, wi
eyes and lean cheeks, was rubbing her with t
of another nurse. The room was silent, ar
Nami's breath was heard.

Suddenly she drew a long sigh, and reopen
eyes, said faintly:

"Is aunt here?"

"I am here."

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Madam Kato drew her chair near the bed, and said to Nami:

"Did you sleep any? What? All right. Now," looking at the nurse and Iku, "please leave the room for a little while."

When the three women had gone, the lady drew her chair closer to the bed, and, brushing aside the hair on Nami's brow, she looked sadly into the face of her niece. Nami also gazed at her aunt.

Presently, with a sigh, Nami took out a sealed letter with her trembling hand from under her pillow.

"Give — this — after I am gone."

Madam Kato wiped her eyes, as she put it securely in her breast.

"Certainly. I will give it to Takeo-san myself."

"The — this ring — "

Nami put her left hand on her aunt's knee. On her third finger, the diamond ring which Takeo gave her at her wedding shone brightly. She had sent back everything that belonged to the house when she was divorced, but she could not part with her ring.

"This — I shall take — with me," Nami said.

Wiping her eyes, Madam Kato only nodded. Nami closed her eyes.

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After a while she opened them again.

"What is he doing — I wonder."

"Takeo-san has already arrived at Formosa, and is working, I believe, and always thinking of us. If possible, we are going to summon him — so your father says. But, Nami-san, I will tell him about you, and give him this letter, too."

A faint smile rose to Nami's lips.

Presently her bloodless cheeks were tinged with red, her breast throbbed and burning tears started from her eyes. With an effort, she exclaimed:

"Oh, my heart! Such a torture!"

Knitting her brow, and pressing her hand to her breast, Nami writhed in agony. She started up in bed, seizing the hands of Madam Kato, who was just going to call the doctor, and with agonizing coughs was overcome by a hemorrhage. She fell back helpless.

The doctor, and all the rest, came into the room.

With the help of the nurses, the doctor gave her immediate relief. They opened a window near the bed.

The cool night air poured into the room.

Outside, the moon had just risen, and its light shone through the branches of the trees.

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The general, the viscountess, Madam Kato, Chizu, Koma, and Iku — all sat by the bed. A soft breeze stirred Nami's hair, and she lay as if already dead. The doctor watched her face closely and felt her pulse, while a nurse stood by him with a candle whose flame flickered in her hand.

Ten — fifteen minutes passed. A slight sigh was heard through the room, and Nami's lips moved. The doctor gave her a spoonful of wine. A long breath was again heard, and Nami muttered:

"Let's go back, let's go back, my dear — mother, we are coming, we are coming — oh, still — here."

Nami opened her eyes.

The moon, just rising over the garden, cast a weird light and touched Nami's face.

The doctor glanced at the general, and left the bedside. The general now took Nami's hand.

"Nami, listen. I am your father — we are all here."

Nami looked up vaguely, moved, and gazed into the general's eyes, misty with tears.

"Father — don't break down," she said.

Weeping quietly, Nami moved her right hand weakly and grasped her father's hand, which held her left.

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"Mother?" Nami asked.

The viscountess came nearer and wiped Nami's tears. Nami took her hand.

"Mother — I am going."

The viscountess's lips quivered, and, covering her face, she left the room without a word.

Encouraging her weeping daughter, Madam Kato drew nearer and took Nami's hands in her own. Koma also came and knelt by her sister's bed. Raising a trembling hand, Nami put it on Koma's head.

"Koma-chan — Sayonara —"

Nami breathed painfully, and Koma, shuddering, gave her sister a spoonful of wine. She now opened her eyes and looked around.

"Ki-chan — Mi-chan?" asked Nami.

The two children had already been sent away for the summer by the viscountess. Nami nodded, and scarcely seemed to know what was going on about her.

At this time, Iku, who was in tears, stepped forward and seized Nami's helpless hand.

"Iku —" said Nami.

"Mi-miss, let me go with you —"

After sending Iku with difficulty into the adjoining room, all was silent. Nami closed her mouth

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and eyes, and the shadow of death seemed about to descend upon her face.

The general drew near for the second time.

"Nami, is there anything more you want to say? Don't give way!"

Called back by a familiar voice, Nami opened her eyes and looked at her aunt.

"Nami-san," said her aunt, "I will do everything for you. Be at peace, and go to your mother's home."

A faint smile rose to her lips, and she soon shut her eyes and breathed her last.

The cold moonlight streamed in and shone on her pale face. The smile was still on her lips, but Nami was sleeping her long sleep.

Three days after, Nami was buried in Aoyama Cemetery.

General Kataoka being a man of wide social acquaintance, the funeral was widely attended, and not a few of Nami's old friends came to bid her farewell. Those who knew her story were saddened to see the general standing disconsolate by the coffin, and even the strangers present wept at the sight of Iku crying over it.

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The deceased being a young lady, many flowers were sent. The only ones refused were brought by a man of about forty. They bore the card of Kawashima House.

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Chapter X

The Meeting at Aoyama

OVER four months had now passed.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon; the shadow of the frost-tinged sumac lay long in the garden. Widow Kawashima, portly as ever, opened a screen, and coming out on the veranda, stood by a water-basin. She was provoked at finding no water in it.

"Matsu — Také!" she called.

At the call, one servant came running from the garden wicket, and the other from the veranda. There was a panic-stricken color on their faces.

"What's the matter with you? I have told you often — look here!"

She took up a dipper and rolled it inside the empty basin. The maids only stood breathless.

"Hurry up!" she exclaimed.

Terrified, the two went away. Muttering something to herself, the widow was about to go in, washing her hands with the water just brought, when the other maid appeared and bowed low.

"What is it?" asked the widow.

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"A gentleman — Yamaki-sama."

At the mention of the name, a sarcastic smile and a look of displeasure appeared on the broad face of the widow. To tell the truth, since Toyo had left, the fall before, Yamaki rarely visited the widow. Hearing of the immense fortune he had made in the late war, the widow was all the more provoked at him, and, as often as she lectured to the servants on the feeling of obligation, she made of him a living example. But then her displeasure now had to give way to custom.

"Show him in," said the widow.

Yamaki seated himself, and appeared to be somewhat embarrassed.

"Yamaki-san, you are quite a stranger."

"Why," Yamaki apologized, "I have long been a stranger without intending to be one. I should have come to see you before, but I have been busily occupied with my business after the war. I am very happy to see you so well."

"Yamaki-san, you made a great deal of money in the war, I hear."

"Why, that is very easy to say, but — just enough to pay for my trouble."

A maid brought in some things tied up with red and white strings on a tray. Saying, "From the

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gentleman," she placed them before the widow and retired.

The widow glanced at them and smiled rather contentedly, as she said:

"Thank you very much."

"Not at all; they are nothing but trifles. Why, I haven't yet congratulated you on the young master's promotion to the rank of lieutenant. I also read in the paper the other day that he has been decorated and given a sum of money. You must be very proud of him. Where is he now? At Saseho?"

"Take? He came back yesterday."

"And is he well?"

"Yes, but just as boyish as ever. To-day he went out in the morning, and is not back yet."

"You must be glad that he has returned. At General Kataoka's they were very unfortunate. It is over a hundred days, I believe. But you can't do anything against that disease. You were very wise to foresee it."

Widow Kawashima looked stern at the mention of Kataoka. She said:

"You don't know how much trouble she caused us. We spent a good deal of money, even had a quarrel in the house, and after all they call me

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a devil. Just think of it, Yamaki-san. More than that, when we heard of the funeral we sent Tazaki with flowers. What do you think they did? They sent them back. Was it not very rude, Yamaki-san?"

When she had learned of the death of Nami, the widow had felt somewhat sorry, but, on finding that her flowers were returned unceremoniously, all her softer feelings vanished, and only the bitterness remained.

"That wasn't right. Surely anybody would be hurt at that. Now, madam," sipping the tea which a maid offered him, "I want to announce to you the marriage of my daughter Toyo."

"Your daughter to marry? I congratulate you. And whom?"

"A graduate of the Imperial University, now Chief of a Bureau in the Department of Agriculture and Commerce. I think you know him. His name is — he used to be a patron of Chijiwa. Oh, talking of Chijiwa, I am very sorry for his untimely death."

A slight shadow passed over the widow's forehead.

"War is an evil thing, isn't it? And when does the ceremony take place?"

"We have fixed it," Yamaki replied, "for the

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day after to-morrow. I desire your presence very much. We shall be proud to have you come. My wife ought to come to ask you, but she is very sorry that she is unable to. And the young master, too, will honor us with his presence — we hope."

The widow nodded. She looked at the clock, which was just striking five.

"What is Take doing, I wonder?"

A naval officer with white crysanthemums in his hand entered the Aoyama Cemetery from Minami-cho Street.

The autumnal sky was clear, and the light of the afternoon sun flooded the cemetery. A frost-stricken leaf descended noiselessly from a cherry-tree, japonicas blooming in the hedges perfumed the air, incense arose in slender threads, and a bird was heard chirping timidly. After the noise of a kuruma wheeling toward Kogaicho had died away, the stillness of the place was felt all the more. And only the distant noise of the city was murmuring dreamily a dirge of human life.

Somebody was passing behind a hedge. Presently there appeared a lady of about thirty. Her eyes were red, and she was holding the hand of a boy about seven in a sailor's suit. They had passed

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by the naval officer a short distance, when the boy called the attention of his mother to him.

"Mamma, he belongs to the navy, too, doesn't he?"

The lady went away, covering her face with her handkerchief.

The naval officer, without noticing them, went on, stopping many times as if to find his way, and reading the newly erected grave-posts. At last he reached a lot hedged in with low shrubs and shaded by pines and cherry-trees. He nodded and moved the wicket, which opened at his touch. In front there was an old tombstone. The officer looked around and stood before a new grave-post at his side. A graceful pine-tree wove an evergreen covering over the grave, and red and yellow cherry leaves were falling around it. On the post was written, in the blackest of ink, "Tomb of Nami Kataoka." The officer looked at the post, and stood as immovable as a stone.

Presently his face quivered, and sobs escaped from his trembling lips.

Takeo had returned yesterday from Formosa.

Five months ago he had caught a glimpse of Nami as he was on his way to the Formosa expedi-

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tion, and later, in that far-off island, he had heard from Madam Kato that she was no more. As soon as he returned, he sought Madam Kato, and implored her to tell him everything about his beloved wife's final hours on earth.

Takeo stood before the grave and burst into tears. Memories of three years floated before his misty eyes, — the day of his marriage, the sunlight at Ikao, the vow at the Fudo Shrine, the last evening at Zushi, and, last of all, the chance meeting at Yamashima. The voice that cried "Come back soon!" was still fresh in his ears, but when he came back she was no more his wife. He came back for the second time, and now she was gone.

"Oh, Nami-san, why did you die?" he exclaimed, weeping bitterly.

A gust of wind passed overhead, and cherry leaves rustled down on the grave-post. As if awakened, Takeo wiped his eyes and approached the grave. He took some withered flowers from the stands, and cleaning the fallen leaves away, replaced them with the chrysanthemums he had brought. He now took out something from his pocket.

It was Nami's last letter. His feelings when he

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read it, receiving it from the hand of Madam Kato, had been overwhelming. He opened it. Not a trace of her beautiful handwriting was to be seen; the letters were wavering, the ink smeared, and the stains of sorrowful tears remained.

"My days being numbered, I wish to leave you a few words. I hardly hoped to see you in this world, but was so glad that we happened to meet the other day by the mercy of Heaven. But I scarcely knew how to use that single moment."

A picture of Nami struggling at the window and throwing her violet handkerchief to him stood clearly before his eyes. Takeo looked up. In front of him there was only the grave-post.

"Everything has gone against us, but I blame nobody. And, though my body will return to dust, my spirit will ever be at your side —"

"Papa, somebody is here." The ringing voice of a boy was heard. The same voice again announced: "Papa, Takeo-san —" And the boy with flowers came running to meet him.

Surprised, Takeo stood with Nami's letter in hand, and looked back, his eyes meeting those of General Kataoka at the wicket.

Takeo's head was bowed to the ground.

Suddenly he felt his hand in a warm grasp.

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On looking up, he found himself standing face to face with the general.

"Takeo-san, I, too, am broken-hearted." Grasping hands, both stood weeping.

After a while the general wiped his tears. Laying his hand on Takeo's shoulder, he broke the silence, in a firm voice.

"Takeo-san, though Nami is dead, I am still your father. But come, be a man, Takeo-san, and look into the future. All our misfortunes have been to prepare us for a greater work. Indeed, it's a long time since we met. Come with me, Takeo-san, and let me hear what happened to you at Formosa."

FINIS.

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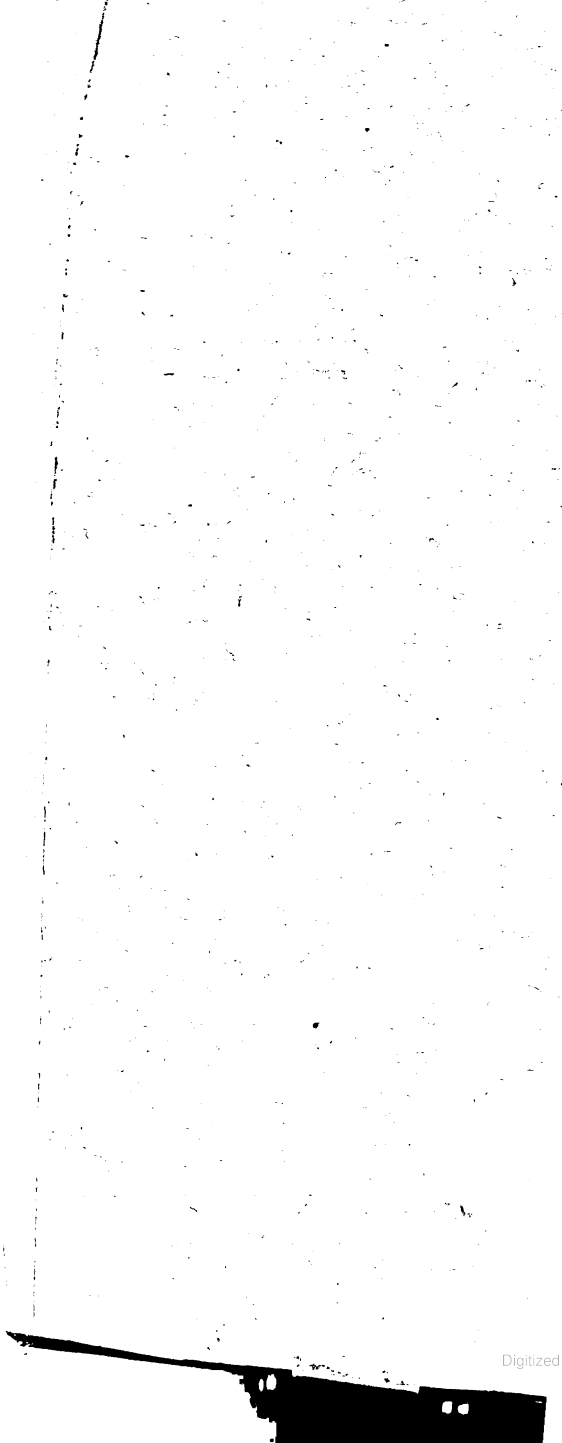
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